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TOO STRANGE NOT TO BE TRUE.

VOL. III.

LONDON

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NEW-STREET SQUARE

# TOO STRANGE NOT TO BE TRUE.

A TALE.

BY

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AUTHORESS OF  
‘ELLEN MIDDLETON,’ ‘LADYBIRD,’ ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



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## TOO STRANGE NOT TO BE TRUE.

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### PART II.—*Continued.*

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#### CHAPTER VI.

If I could see him it were well with me.

*Coleridge's Wallenstein.*

There came an eve of festal hours—  
Rich music filled that garden's bowers ;  
Lamps that from flowering branches hung,  
On sparks of dew soft colour flung ;  
And bright forms glanced—a fairy show  
Under the blossoms to and fro.

But one, a lone one, 'midst the throng  
Seemed reckless all of dance and song ;  
He was a youth of dusky mien,  
Whereon the Indian sun had been,  
Of crested brow and long black hair,  
A stranger, like the palm-tree, there.      *Mrs. Hemans.*

But though this mayden tender were of age,  
Yet in the brest of her verginite  
Ther was enclosed rype and sad corrage.      *Chaucer.*

A few days after the occurrence related in the last chapter, Madame d'Auban and her husband left Paris for Brittany. Hopes had

been held out to him of an appointment in the Isle de Bourbon, but some weeks were to elapse before he could receive a decisive answer. In the meantime he wished to sell a small property he had in Brittany, and proposed to employ the fund it would fetch in carrying out his wife's project of a journey to St. Petersburgh. He knew it to be a wild, possibly a dangerous, scheme, and deemed it very improbable that the results would be satisfactory to her maternal feelings; but he had promised when he married her not to put any obstacles in the way of her seeking to see her son; and on the eve of what would, most likely, be a final departure from Europe, he felt it right to allow her the chance of looking once more on her boy's face, even though she might not gain admittance to the young sovereign's presence in any of the thousand ways she was always devising. Her meeting with the Comte de Saxe had proved that she was not so much altered in appearance as she fancied, but it would be easy in St. Petersburgh to put on such a disguise as would effectually prevent any chance of recognition; and on some public

occasion, at all events, she might feast her eyes on the features memory so faintly retraced and imagination so often pictured.

It was on a beautiful morning in May, that after leaving Mina, not without many anxious thoughts, at the Hotel d'Orgeville, they drove away from Paris in a diligence, along one of those old-fashioned chaussées, bordered on both sides by elms, and fields intersected with rows of apple trees. White fleecy clouds were careering over the calm bright sky, and the conducteur whistled the tune of the ‘Bon roi Dagobert,’ as, amidst clouds of dust, they rolled on towards the northern coast. On the evening of the third day they reached Colonel d’Auban’s native place. Once again he looked on the well-known coast, its rocky islets and overhanging cliffs. He heard the osprey’s cry, the sound of the waves receding on the stony beach of Keir Anna, and the bells of the little chapel built by the sailors in honour of Mary, Star of the Sea. The scent of the clover fields, mixing with the briny smell of the ocean, came floating on the breeze. It seemed to breathe new life into his frame; under the roof of the little

Breton inn for the first time for nearly three years he slept without dreaming of Red Indians and murdered women. The few days they spent in this obscure village seemed to do him all and even more than the good which the doctor had anticipated from a change of scene and air. His wife sat by his side on the sea shore, or wandered with him through the fragrant lanes around the old manor house where he was born. Spring was in its full beauty, and as they inhaled the fresh sea breezes, and trod on the soft herbage of the perfumed downs, a repose stole over his mind and a strength returned to his limbs, such as he had never hoped again to feel. For both of them it was a blessed breathing-time. They felt it to be so, and turned back with many a wistful look towards the little village on the shore, whilst they slowly ascended, in advance of the diligence, the first hill on the road to Hâvre, beyond which they were to lose sight of it.

Hâvre, with its crowded streets, its noisy quays, and the forests of masts in its busy port, formed a striking contrast to the peaceful spot they had just left. On their way

to the hotel which they had written to for lodgings, they stopped at an office to enquire about the vessel in which they intended to sail for St. Petersburgh. It was expected to heave anchor in two days ; and d'Auban said he would return on the following morning to make final arrangements about their berths. At the hotel they hoped to find letters from Paris, and were not disappointed ; on the table of the little parlour they were shown into, two or three were lying.

‘ Oh, there is one from our Mina,’ cried Madame d’Auban, her eyes sparkling with delight. She sat down and opened it.

‘ Read to me what that darling writes,’ he said, with a bright smile ; and seating himself opposite to her, he leant his head on his hands and listened.

This was Mina’s letter :—

‘ Dearest Mamma and dearest Papa,—I am so happy ! When you went away, I thought I should not have a moment’s happiness during your absence, but a great joy has come to me since, which has been like a burst of sunshine in a dark sky, for I was very lonely, and felt very miserable in this

great Paris without you. My heart is even now very sad at times, but I no longer feel lonely. My brother is come. My dear brother Ontara is in Paris. O mother, I could not close my eyes with joy. I could do nothing all the night after I heard it, but thank God, and long for the next day. I was to see him the next day. I have seen him, and he is as good and as handsome, and loves his sister Mina as much as ever. He wishes to be a Christian, and I am to go every day with Madame Maret to the Bishop's house to translate the instructions he will give him before he is baptized. Nobody but me could make him understand. He speaks only a few words of French. M. Maret said he would write to you all about it. He has bought him from the government. What right has the government to sell men, and to make slaves of princes? But M. Maret will give him his liberty. He told me so last night. It is the old Sachem's crucifix which brought it all about. Ontara's conversion I mean. We sat together looking at it, and I cried with a joy that was like pain, it went so deeply through my heart. Ontara

did not shed tears, because Indians never weep, but he said words strong as the wind and hot as fire about the Christian prayer. And when I was told to ask him what he wished most to see in Paris, he answered : 'The house of God—the home of the Great Spirit.' I have not time to write much more. Madame Maret has sent her carriage to fetch me. Dearest mamma, at the Hotel de Sénac, where I saw my brother Ontara, I met the gentleman who bent the silver plate. He was very kind, and talked to me a long time. Papa told me to write some news, but I don't think I know any. I have told you the good news which makes me so happy. Everything else seems stupid. I heard somebody say last night that the Princesse des Ursins is very ill, and that the young Czar of Russia' . . . the letter fell from the mother's hand—her husband seized it . . . 'that the young Czar of Russia has just died of the small-pox. Give a hundred kisses to dearest papa. O that I could hold you both in my arms. Do come back soon to your own Mina. I am very happy with my dear brother, but can never be quite happy whilst

you are both away from me.—Your loving and dutiful daughter,

‘WILHELMINA D’AUBAN.’

This was a terrible letter for a mother to receive! The blow was a sudden one, and the manner of it horribly painful. The affection her daughter expressed for the stranger she called her brother, the joyful tone in which she wrote, filled her heart with a feeling which was almost like resentment. ‘O! that you had let me tell her,’ she cried. ‘It is too dreadful that his sister . . .’ Then she hid her face in her hands, and said no more.

It was a very bitter grief. ‘It may not be true, dearest,’ said her husband; and he went to enquire at the Russian consulate.

She never doubted that it was true. There had always been in her mind a misgiving that she should not see again the royal child whom she had left in its cradle. Now the intervening years seemed as nothing. The young monarch dying in the flower of his age, rose before her as the baby of those bygone days. She scarcely noticed d’Auban’s

return, or the words of pity and sympathy which he addressed to her. For some hours she could not weep or speak, but went into a church and prayed that the hard dull feeling at her heart might melt. At last softer emotions rose, and her tears flowed. It was a kind of sorrow which had its peculiar bitterness, and its peculiar consolations. Now she felt disengaged from the single tie which had bound her to the past. Her son seemed in some ways nearer to her in the invisible world, where her prayers might help him, than on the far-off throne she had not dared to approach. By degrees a peaceful sadness stole over her—a sense of rest. She could discern mercy in the blow which had removed him from a scene of so much strife and temptation.

When she had arrived at Hâvre her feelings had been very much excited. Looking at the billowy sea, on which she was soon to embark, it seemed as if all its waves and storms had gone over her.

The fitful lights, the transient gleams, reflected in its bosom from a tempestuous sky and a clouded sunset, pictured the agitation

in her breast. Now all was calm as a waveless sea. Death's subduing power had hushed those billows to rest. Many a doubt was solved by its cold hand, and she who had so eagerly and yet so fearfully looked forward to that strange journey, now prepared to retrace her steps with a sadder but a more tranquil heart.

'How glad you must now be,' she said to her husband, 'to have yielded to my wild wish. Another day and I should have been on my way to St. Petersburgh ! How strange it seems ! No outward change in my life, and yet so great a one in my hidden existence. Was there ever, I wonder, so extraordinary a fate as mine ?'

As she said this, her eye rested on Mina's letter, which had remained on the table, and she exclaimed, 'Take it away. I cannot bear the sight of it.'

D'Auban was grieved about this letter. Of course, their beloved child was not to blame in writing as she had done, and the outpouring of her feelings of joy was as natural as the feeling itself. But her parents found it difficult to sympathise at that

moment with the happiness she expressed at Ontara's arrival in Paris. They were very glad of the young Indian chief's safety, and thankful for his conversion. It would have been easier for them to rejoice at the news, if it had not been coupled with the actual announcement of her unknown brother's death. Both felt how immense was the debt of gratitude they owed to the Natches youth, and that they were on every account bound to welcome him as a son. They did not like to acknowledge, even to themselves, the involuntary feeling of regret that Mina should have met with him again, under circumstances likely to increase and excite to the uttermost her interest and sympathy. They wanted her to be a little more like other girls, without losing any of her goodness or her charm. Perhaps they wanted what was not possible. At all events, the romance and tenderness of her nature, joined to a simplicity which baffled all attempts to make her see things in a conventional light, made it probable that she would attach herself more than ever to her adopted brother; and would behave to him

in Paris with the same innocent and affectionate familiarity which had existed between them in the days of her captivity. The tie which had been formed between them when his protection had been all important, and the faithful way in which he had fulfilled the trust reposed in him, had made the strongest impression on her heart and her imagination. Madame d'Auban knew her daughter's disposition, and the impassioned gratitude she bore to her young deliverer, who had three times acted by her the part of a guardian angel. Not for the world would she have checked that feeling ; or been untrue, herself, to those sentiments of gratitude ; but she was, nevertheless, anxious. The position was a peculiar one, and Mina might surprise those about her by the exhibition of feelings they would not understand. She longed to reach Paris, and hasten their departure from a country whence she could now carry away with her everything she had left to care for on earth.

On the evening which Mina had alluded to in her letter to her parents, there had been, as was usual at the Hotel d'Orgeville,

visitors in the evening. She was sitting, with the young ladies of the family and their governess, at a table in one part of the room, at some distance from the circle which surrounded the mistress of the house. There was one person who generally managed to seat himself by the side of the little Creole, and to engage her in conversation. This was M. Maret, the brother of Father Maret, whom she had so much loved, and about whom he had always something to ask, and she something to tell. Every detail of his apostolic life at the Illinois interested him ; and he never wearied of hearing her relate the story of the last journey he had made with her parents and herself, and of the way in which he had employed the hours which preceded his tragical death. She had often mentioned to him his visit to the old dying sachem ; and how, with his last breath, he had recommended Ontara to her father. And this led them often to talk of Ontara. She told him how good and generous he was ; how he had been a friend in the hour of need to her mother and herself ; and that he preserved a touching reverence for the

black robe who had been kind to his adopted father, the old Sachem Outalissi. D'Auban had confirmed all his daughter's statements as to the merits of the young Indian chief; and had begged M. Maret, if any intelligence as to his fate ever reached the Government, to use all his influence in obtaining for him the most favourable treatment. He had spoken to the same effect to the Minister of the Colonies, and never omitted an opportunity of discharging this debt of gratitude.

On the evening already referred to, M. Maret had just returned from a journey to the south of France. As he entered the salon of the Hotel d'Orgeville, there was a look of satisfaction in his countenance, mixed with a little self-complacency. After paying his compliments to Madame d'Orgeville and bowing to the rest of the company, he said, as he seated himself by that lady's side, 'I hastened, madam, to pay my respects to you ; but my visit must, I fear, be a short one, for I have a guest at home to whose entertainment I must devote myself.'

'A personage of distinction, I doubt not?' said Madame d'Orgeville.

‘I think,’ answered M. Maret, glancing round the room and fixing his eyes on Mina, ‘that I may venture to reply in the affirmative. My guest is of princely birth.’

‘A prince!’ cried two or three ladies at once. ‘A French or a foreign prince?’

‘A foreigner, mesdames.’

‘The pretender, perhaps?’ suggested one of the gentlemen.

‘The King of England, you mean?’ cried an elderly lady, who had been about the Court of St. Germain.

‘No; I had the honour of meeting that royal individual at the Duc de Lauzun’s house some years ago, when he was at Passy. But he is not the person alluded to.’

‘A foreigner!’ ejaculated Madame d’Orgeville. ‘You must really give us a hint. Is he German or Italian? Catholic or Protestant?’

‘Neither, Madame.’

‘Heavens! Is he a Turk?’ cried Madlle. Bachelier, the governess.

‘My young guest, mesdames, is the scion of a royal race; the last remaining descendant of the Children of the Sun.’

Mina started up, much to the surprise of

her companions, clasped her hands together, and, breathless with surprise and agitation, gasped out the words—‘My brother Ontara?’

‘Yes; the young prince Ontara,’ answered the Prince de Condé’s secretary, rubbing his hands with delight. ‘Mesdames, this noble Indian aided the escape of our friend M. le Colonel d’Auban, and was the friend and protector of his wife and daughter during their captivity.’

‘And he adopted me as his sister,’ said Mina, her eyes filling with tears. ‘After the destruction of the Natches and the slaughter of their royal family,’ M. Maret went on to say, ‘he and another young man who had also escaped the vengeance of our troops, took refuge amidst a neighbouring tribe, and lived there in concealment. There was a Christian Mission in that neighbourhood, and he used to visit the black robe. Oh, I am so glad!’ ejaculated Mina, whose head was bent forward, and whose eyes seemed to dilate with the intentness of her interest. ‘Some fanatical Indians accused him of a leaning towards the Frenchmen’s prayer, and either on that account or to gain

the reward promised by the government, betrayed him to the French authorities. He and his companion were carried in chains to New Orleans. M. Perrier ordered them to be well treated and sent to France, where the government would then ultimately decide their fate. They were to be sold as slaves on their arrival, unless any special orders to the contrary had been received. I happened to be at Marseilles when they landed, and offered to purchase Ontara in order to take him away with me at once. This was agreed to under reserve, and thus he became my slave.'

A shade, dark as a thunder-cloud, rose on Mina's speaking face. 'But I need hardly add only in name, and to enable me to receive into my home as a son the youth to whom my martyred brother's last thought was given.'

There was a general murmur of sympathy; and as to Mina, she could not any longer sit still. Darting across the room she seized his hand in both hers, and in the fulness of her heart, exclaimed :

'I love you dearly, M. Maret. May the

good God reward you.' He made room for her on the couch, and she sat down by his side, hanging down her lovely head, for she felt as if she had been too bold, but not letting go his hand.

'I was immensely struck,' he went on to say, 'with Ontara's appearance and manners. He is singularly gentle and pleasing, and shows great intelligence, although he knows as yet but a very few words of French. I contrived to make him understand that I was the brother of the black robe of the Illinois who was killed at the Natches. The Indian words I have learnt from you, Mademoiselle Mina, were of great use to me. His face lighted up immediately; and, half by words half by signs, he expressed that he remembered that black robe, and would love me because I was his brother. I then mentioned your name, Mademoiselle Mina, and I wish every lady here could have seen him at that moment. Mesdames, it would have made the fortune of one of our best actors to have caught that expression. It was emotion, but an emotion that rose from the soul into the eyes, if I may so speak, without stirring a

muscle of the calm immovable countenance. I felt as if I could hear his heart beat, but his features did not move. He drew a little crucifix from his breast, and pressed it to his lips.

‘We both kissed it in the forest where we parted,’ said the girl, in a low voice. ‘I knew he would always keep it. What was the other Indian’s name, M. Maret?’

‘Osseo.’

‘Oh! I knew him,’ Mina exclaimed, and shuddered.

‘He has escaped,’ said M. Maret. ‘The very night they disembarked he got away from the lodging where they were; and when we left Marseilles nothing had been heard of him.’

‘When shall I see Ontara, dear M. Maret?’

‘If Madame d’Orgeville will permit it, I will bring him here to-morrow.’

‘Permit it!’ exclaimed that lady. ‘I shall be quite delighted to make acquaintance with the young Indian prince. My rooms will scarcely hold all the friends who will wish to be present on the occasion of his first introduction into French society.’

‘How interesting it will be,’ said one lady to another, ‘to witness the meeting between the lovely Creole and her deliverer?’

Mina thought it very long to wait till the next evening, but did not venture to say so. As M. Maret was going away, she asked Madame d’Orgeville if she might take a sprig of jessamine out of a nosegay on the table, and giving it to him, she said :

‘Will you tell Ontara that Mina sends him this flower. In the language we used to speak together, it means, “I love you with all my heart.”’

Mdlle. Bachelier lifted up her eyes, and shrugged her shoulders, as much as to say, ‘Thank Heaven that girl is no pupil of mine!’ or, in familiar English, ‘Who ever witnessed such behaviour?’ and it was probable nobody ever had, in the only world Mdlle. Bachelier was acquainted with, seen anything at all like it.

Mina’s simplicity was too perfect to be easily understood. Some of Madame d’Orgeville’s visitors, who belonged to the school which influenced through its different phases the tone of French literature, from Rousseau to Bernardin de St. Pierre and Chateaubriand,

enchanted with the beauty and *naïveté* of Mina d'Auban, extolled her sensibility, and raised her to the rank of a heroine of romance. The prudent governess, and the sentimental ladies, were both mistaken in the estimate of her character. She was neither bold nor romantic. She had been brought up under peculiar circumstances, amidst peculiar scenes, in a remote country. She had strong feelings, and what she strongly felt she expressed without disguise. Her figurative imaginative manner of speaking was just as natural to her as the conventional language of a French drawing-room was to her companions. The wish to attract notice or to excite admiration had never even crossed her mind.

Changeful and faint was her fair cheek's hue,  
Though clear as a flower which the light looks  
    through,  
And the glance of her dark, deep, azure eye,  
For the aspect of girlhood at times too high.

On the following morning, M. Maret called on Madame d'Orgeville to inform her that Madame de Sézac greatly desired to induce her—instead of receiving the Natches prince at her own house—to accept an invitation to

the soirée she was to give that evening, and to meet him there instead. Several distinguished personages of the court and the town, as well as some of the most eminent members of the Paris clergy, had intimated their intention of honouring her with their company.

‘It would be a most brilliant réunion,’ M. Maret observed, with evident satisfaction.

If this excellent man had a weakness, it was the love of a little innocent display. Madame d’Orgeville was very gracious, and yielded with a good grace her prior right to the visit of the Indian chief. Though a little disappointed at having to put off the party she had intended to assemble on this occasion, she was pleased at being invited to the Hôtel de Sénac, the society of which was more decidedly aristocratic than her own.

Madame de Sénac was a widow, rich, amiable, and accomplished ; her morals as unexceptionable as her character was unimpeachable. Having married a man of high rank, she had the *entrées* at court ; but her own family belonging to the parliamentary noblesse, she was also connected with the financial world of that day, and her salon

was a neutral territory, in which persons of various ranks and various parties met oftener than at any other house in Paris. Pious and learned ecclesiastics sometimes attended her receptions, as well as literary and worldly abbés. Courtiers and men of letters, bankers and princes, honoured her with their company. There were certain lingering traditions of the Hôtel de Rambouillet in the tone of her more intimate society—a refinement which was beginning to be lost sight of since the days of the regency. But if some of her *habitués* maintained the noble dignity of language and of manners which prevailed in Madame de Maintenon's boudoir, others were beginning to indulge in the false sentimentality and pedantic free-thinking of the eighteenth century.

Madame d'Orgeville's satisfaction at the prospect of her first appearance in this new scene of fashion, was greatly increased by Madame de Sénac's pressing request that she would bring with her Colonel d'Auban's daughter. She foresaw that Mina's beauty, and the tie between her and the young prince, who would have been called in our days the

lion of the evening, would attract considerable notice ; and she spared no pains to dress her in the most becoming manner, which she had taste enough to see was as simply as possible, with just enough of peculiarity as served to recall that, notwithstanding her height, she was still almost a child, and that she had been born under a transatlantic sky.

The apartments of the Hôtel de Sénac were brilliantly lighted that evening, and coloured lamps hung amidst the foliage of its spacious garden. At an early hour, numbers of persons arrived, all anxious to witness the introduction of a native of a new—and, to them, utterly unknown — world, into a Parisian drawing-room. The Indian chief was an object of curiosity to men of science, of letters, and of piety ; all such were, for different reasons, curious to watch the effects which a first sight of European civilized society would have on the young Natches.

When M. and Madame d'Orgeville arrived, the principal room was almost full. When it became known that the young girl who accompanied them had been present at the first fearful scenes of the insurrection, and

owed her life to the protection of the Indian youth now in Paris, the wish to see and to speak to her became general. As much of her story as was briefly related by the mistress of the house flew from mouth to mouth, quite a rush was made to the part of the room where she was sitting, quite unconscious of the attention she excited, and only longing for the moment of Ontara's arrival.

‘Did you ever see so lovely a creature?’ said the Duc d'Epernon to the Comte de Courtray.

‘Better worth notice, I should say, than the Red Indian we are come to see,’ answered the Count.

‘Can you believe she is not yet thirteen years old?’

‘She looks sixteen, if not seventeen.’

‘What is her name?’

‘D’Orban or d’Auban.’

‘There was a colonel of that name who rescued a number of French captives from a tribe of savages.’

‘Exactly so; and this girl is his daughter.’

‘She will not be long on his hands, if

beauty achieves fortune. What eyes ! What a smile ! The world will be at her feet some day.'

A celebrated linguist, who had been studying a vocabulary of Indian words compiled by a missionary, in order to frame a compliment to the Natches prince, requested the favour of an introduction to Mina.

' Mademoiselle, do you speak the Natches language ? ' he asked. ' If so, will you have the kindness to instruct me how to pronounce this sentence ? ' Others crowding around her, begged to hear from her own lips the story of her captivity and her escape. Madame d'Orgeville, enchanted at finding herself, by means of her young companion, a centre of attraction, desired Mina to comply with the request, and relate all she had witnessed of the Natches insurrection. She coloured, and her voice trembled a little, as, turning to her protectress, she said, ' Where shall I begin ? '

' With your arrival at the Indian city, on the eve of the massacre, my love.'

The first words the child spoke in her sweet, musical, and slightly tremulous voice,

arrested every one's attention. She ceased to feel shy when once she had begun. It would make every body love Ontara, she thought, to hear how good he had been to the white captives; and to speak of the scenes so indelibly impressed on her mind, but which she never mentioned in her home, was a relief to her pent-up feelings. And so she told her simple, thrilling tale with such pathos and such natural eloquence, and her countenance lighted up with such a wonderful animation, that soon every sound was hushed in the crowded room, and every eye was fixed upon her speaking face. She described the death of the priest at the altar; the massacre which ensued; her father's escape; her mother's anguish; Ontara's generous friendship; his adoption of her as his sister; their affection for each other; their flight through the forest where the captives were doomed to death; her father's return at the head of the brave Choktaws; the rescue of the French prisoners; the struggle between Pearl Feather and Osseo; Ontara's arrival; Pearl Feather's death, and her final deliverance. Sometimes her cheeks

glowed with enthusiasm, sometimes her voice trembled with excitement. Tears streamed down her face without marring its loveliness ; and when she spoke of the beautiful land in which these wild scenes had been enacted, there was a mournful, impassioned tenderness in her expressions and in the tone of her voice, which thrilled the bosoms of her auditors, and lingered in their ears, even when she had finished speaking, like the notes of some exquisite music. Many an eye which had long ceased to weep was moistened that day ; and hearts which had forgotten what it is to feel, were conscious of an unwonted emotion.

Soon after Mina had ended her recital, whilst she was answering the many questions which were addressed to her, a servant came up to Madame de Sénac, and told her M. Maret and the Indian prince were arrived. She went to meet them, and when they entered the room, all eyes now turned on the stranger. The greatest curiosity was felt as to the way in which two young creatures would meet, who were bound to one another by so singular a tie ; who had parted in a

primæval forest amidst danger and death, and now stood face to face in a Paris drawing-room, under the eyes of a set of worldly men and women. Well, the refined, well-bred society was taken by surprise. They were prepared to witness an interesting scene ; they did not expect to be touched to the bottom of their hearts. The moment Ontara appeared, Mina ran to him, threw her arms around his neck, and kissed his cheek. He started, his frame quivered, his eyes, which had been bent on the ground, were suddenly raised. Stepping back, he seized Mina, held her at arm's length, and gazed on her face with an intensity which seemed to pierce through her features to her very soul. In that long fixed gaze there was reminiscence, and joy, and eager questioning. At last, in his own tongue, he said, ' Sister of my adoption, have you forgotten our language ? Have you forgotten the land that was a garden of delight before the white man had set his foot upon it ? '

' I have forgotten nothing, my brother ; nothing,' cried Mina, her eyes filling with tears.

‘Not your promise?’ he eagerly exclaimed.

‘No; nothing,’ she repeated.

‘I remember every word we have spoken together.’

‘And I, too, have not forgotten my promise,’ said the Indian, and he drew the sachem’s crucifix from his bosom.

By this time a crowd had gathered round them, and Madame d’Orgeville, stepping forward, took Mina by the hand and made her sit down again by her side. The little hand was cold and trembling, and the child’s heart—for it was, after all, still a child’s heart—was beating too fast for its strength. When Ontara had asked her if she remembered her promise, she had unhesitatingly replied that she did, for it was the truth. But since she had been in France, and had become acquainted with other girls, she had begun to understand why her mother had been vexed and almost angry with her for having promised Ontara never to marry a white man. In the midst of her joy at his return, she felt a vague misgiving that her parents would not be as glad as herself to see him, and this sorely troubled her.

Meanwhile several persons were endeavouring to converse with Ontara, partly by means of signs, partly by means of the few French words he had learnt. Everybody was attracted by his appearance. He had grown very much during the two last years. His regular features ; his fine melancholy eyes ; the rich olive of his complexion, had all the beauty of which his race are sometimes possessed ; and Mina, perfectly accustomed to the colour of the red men, and who saw in his dress, changed in many respects, but not altogether altered since his arrival in Europe, a reminiscence of the happy days of her childhood, thought there could not be on earth a handsomer form and face than that of her adopted brother. There were traces of sorrow and of suffering, as well as of stern endurance, on his brow. His keen, intelligent countenance betokened intellectual power. To the voluble speeches and compliments addressed to him, he answered :—

‘ Your words are good,’ or, ‘ It is well,’ or ‘ Ontara thanks you ;’ that was almost all he could say in French.

‘ My sweet love,’ said Madame de Sénac to

Mina, 'some of these gentlemen wish you to ask your Indian brother what he most wishes to see in Paris. They would gladly act as his guides, and conduct him to the king's palace, or the picture galleries, or the shops, or the public gardens. Find out, my dear, what would interest him most.'

Mina went up to Ontara, and after speaking a few words with him, turned round to the company. 'My brother says that his father and his brethren are no more, and their palaces destroyed. He cares not to see the palace of the French chief. The beautiful gardens of his native village are uprooted, and he does not wish to look on the gardens of the great French village. His kinsmen are bondsmen; chains are on their hands, and the iron of those chains has entered into his soul. He has nothing to buy in the white man's cabins. He says there is only one place for the slave, the exile, the sad in heart, and it is there he wishes to go. To the home of the Great Spirit: to the Temple of the Christian prayer.'

Mina's eyes overflowed as she translated Ontara's words.

The Bishop of Auxerre stepped forward

and said to Mina, ‘ Ask him if he wishes to be made a Christian.’

She did so, and again rendered his answer into French. ‘ The Christian’s God was once sold as a slave. He had no cabin of his own. He was an exile from his home in the skies. The sun is a bright and beautiful god, far away above our heads, but I do not care for him now. *This* God (and he touched the crucifix in his bosom) is the God of the mourner ; the redeemer of the captive.’

The pathos of this speech struck the men and women of the world who heard it. If there were present philosophers of the new school, inclined to scoff at the homage paid to the God of sufferers—the God made man—they were in the minority, and did not venture openly to sneer.

M. de Caylus laid his hand on Mina’s shoulder, and said, ‘ My child, tell the young chief that I will myself take him to-morrow to our great Christian temple, the cathedral of Nôtre Dame ; and that I shall be happy to instruct him, and to prepare him for baptism.’

Mina conveyed the bishop’s message to

Ontara, who answered something that made her smile. The bishop desired to know what he had said. ‘Monseigneur, Ontara says you are not a black robe; and that it is the religion of the black robes he believes in.’

M. d’Auxerre laughed. ‘Tell him,’ he said, ‘that though I wear purple I believe and teach the same religion as the black robes; that we are sheep of the same flock, if not birds of the same feather.’

Mina exchanged a few words with Ontara, and then, turning to the bishop, said, ‘Monseigneur, I have told him that you are one of the chief shepherds of the flock, and he says it is well, and that your words are good.’

M. de Caylus smiled, and said to M. Maret, ‘I will call in my carriage to-morrow, and take your young friend to Nôtre Dame. It is becoming that his wish should be fulfilled, and that the time-honoured walls of our old cathedral should witness his first act of homage at the foot of a Christian altar.’ Then, turning to Madame d’Orgeville, he added, ‘Madame, I understand that this young lady remains under your care during her

parents' absence. Will you permit her to act as interpreter between my neophyte and me ?'

A courteous reply was given, and M. Maret proposed that his wife should call every day for Mina, and take her to M. d'Auxerre's hotel.

The bishop thanked him, and said to Mina, ' You will go through a course of theology, Mademoiselle ; and whilst teaching your deliverer you will yourself acquire knowledge.'

Mina answered by a request which she made in a low voice. ' Monseigneur, may Ontara and I make our first communion together ?'

' I hope so, my child,' the bishop kindly replied ; and then he went to pay his compliments to some of the great people in the room.

Madame de Sénac had conducted Ontara into her picture gallery, and Mina was following them with her eyes, when her attention was arrested by a tall man in uniform, whom she felt sure she had seen somewhere before, and the next moment she remembered it was the gentleman who had spoken to her mother

in the Tuileries gardens. She whispered to Madame d'Orgeville :

‘ Madame, what is the name of that tall officer in the doorway ? ’

‘ He is a general, my dear, and one of the bravest in the French army—the Count Maurice de Saxe.’

‘ Ah ! ’ thought Mina, ‘ he said to mamma, “ Where can you find a truer friend than Maurice of Saxony ? ” and then other things he had said came back to her mind : “ Have we not wept over the death of another Wilhelmina ? ” and, “ Dear companion of my early days ! ” and she mused over these sentences, and wondered if the count would know her again, and perhaps speak to her. She could hardly fancy that he had been her mother’s playfellow—that they had gathered flowers and built reed huts, or ran races together, in their childhood. She wished he would roll up another silver plate, that Ontara might see it.

‘ Have you seen the wonder of the evening, M. le Comte ? ’ said a pretty woman, dressed in the extreme of the fashion, to M. de Saxe.

‘Not the Red Indian, madame, if you mean him.’

‘No; I mean something infinitely more attractive. A lovely Creole—a mere child, but a perfect beauty. Your eyes will be much better employed in looking at her than at the savage.’

‘I am quite satisfied with their present employment,’ answered the count, with a smile.

‘Oh, but I really wish you to see this paragon. Her meeting with the Indian was the prettiest thing imaginable. I would not have missed it for all the world. Such vivacity; such charming sensibility; and then such eyes! But there she is, on the sofa near the window.’

‘That girl,’ exclaimed the count, ‘that young girl in white, with a single rose in her hair? Who is she? Who is she with?’

‘With Madame d’Orgeville, the wife of the Président des Comptes.’

‘That lady in green, do you know her, madame? May I ask you to introduce me?’

While the count was speaking he did not take his eyes off Mina.

‘Ah! M. le Comte! Have you fallen in love already?’ exclaimed the lady. ‘Is she not charming? But how old those creoles look! I hope they have grey hairs at thirty, or it would not be fair upon us who were frights at that young lady’s age.’

So saying the lady led the way across the room, and introduced M. de Saxe to Madame d’Orgeville. He bowed, and looking towards Mina, said:—

‘Mademoiselle is your daughter, madame?’

‘O! no, M. le Comte. My daughters are too young to go into society.’

‘Aye, indeed! I thought you were too young, madame, to be that young lady’s mother.’

‘Pardon! M. le Comte. My daughters are both older than Mademoiselle d’Auban; but she was invited here to-night to meet the Indian chief, whose only acquaintance she is in what we must henceforward call the old world. It is a curious history, M. de Saxe. This young Natches saved her and her father at the time of the insurrection.’

‘ You don’t say so ! ’ exclaimed the count, seating himself by the side of Mina. ‘ O, mademoiselle, do tell me all about it. I like of all things exciting stories ; next to fighting a battle, the best thing is to hear of one.’

‘ Is it true, M. de Saxe,’ said a lady who was sitting on the other side of the count, ‘ that a troupe of actors always accompany you in your campaigns, and that, on a recent occasion, notice was given in the playbills that there would be no performance the next day on account of the battle M. le Comte de Saxe intended to give ? ’

‘ Perfectly true, madame,’ answered the count ; ‘ but though I am passionately fond of the play, I am not sorry sometimes to escape a theatrical performance.’

And withdrawing his chair he turned again to the little girl on his left. The bystanders smiled, for, though the lady had never appeared on the stage, she had the reputation of being a consummate actress. M. de Saxe drew Mina into conversation, and made her repeat to him the story she had already told that evening. When she spoke of her father, and the rescue of the prisoners, he said :

‘I remember hearing at the time of Colonel d’Auban’s gallant conduct. I wish you joy, mademoiselle. You have a brave man for your father. Will you tell him, when he returns to Paris, that the Comte de Saxe would be proud to make his acquaintance?’

Mina coloured with pleasure. ‘My father and mother are in Brittany,’ she said.

‘Ah! and when do they come back?’

‘I don’t know,’ she answered, rather sadly.

The expression of her face put him so powerfully in mind of her mother at her age, that he could scarcely help saying so.

‘You have been already a great traveller, Mademoiselle Wilhelmina. Should you not like to see some of the great cities of Europe?’

‘I should like to see Rome, and Venice, and Madrid,’ she answered.

‘And St. Petersburg, would you not like to go there?’

‘No, sir; it must be so very cold.’

‘I’ll try again,’ thought the count.

‘Have you heard of the death of the Czar, Mademoiselle Mina?’

‘I heard he was dead a moment ago.

Somebody said so just before you came in.  
Was he not very young ?'

'Very young ; and he has left no brother to succeed him. Have you a brother, Mademoiselle Wilhelmina ?'

She blushed very much, and answered, 'Ontara is my adopted brother. When my mother was afraid Osseo would drag me away from her, Ontara adopted me as his sister, after the manner of the Indians.'

'I have heard that they consider the tie of adoption as sacred as that of blood.'

'And so you have no real brothers and sisters ? Neither have I ; but when I was young I had a play-fellow who was very like you.'

'And did you love her very much ?'

'With all my heart.'

'And is that little girl dead ?'

'I thought she was for a long time, but I now believe she is still alive. But I am afraid we shall never have any more happy hours together. We can never be children again. Our early years, Mademoiselle Mina, are the happiest in our lives.'

'I suppose so,' said Mina, pensively. 'I

‘don’t think I shall ever be so happy as I was at St. Agathe.’

‘Where is St. Agathe?’

‘On the banks of the great Indian River in the Illinois. It is the most beautiful place in the world.’

‘More beautiful than Paris, or Versailles, or St. Cloud?’

Mina shrugged her shoulders in a contemptuous manner, which infinitely amazed the count.

‘Were you born in America, Mademoiselle Wilhelmina?’

‘Yes; at St. Agathe, and I lived there till I was nine years old. But it is sold to strangers, and I shall never see it again.’

‘Did your mother love it as much as you did?’

‘She loved it very much, but she never talks of it now. My father was so ill after the Natches’ insurrection that she does not wish to live amongst Indians. I do not think she herself would mind it.’

‘Do your parents intend to remain in Paris?’

‘O no; my father is trying to get an appointment in the West Indian islands.’

At that moment the conversation between the Comte de Saxe and the young girl was interrupted. M. and Madame d’Orgeville were going away. Lookers-on had wondered at the earnest manner in which the count had been conversing with her. She said ‘good bye’ to him in a confiding, friendly manner, which seemed, for some reason or other, to affect him. He kissed her hand with a respectful tenderness which puzzled the lady who had vainly tried to attract his attention. She wondered how he could find amusement in talking so long to a pretty child. When Mina was gone, he remained some time in the same place buried in thought. Did she or did she not know who her mother was? That was what he could not make out. She seemed quite indifferent about the death of Peter the Second, but had seemed agitated when he asked if she had a brother. He resolved to call in a few days at Madame d’Orgeville’s, and to sift the mystery.

During the following week Mina was taken every day by Madame Maret to the Bishop of

Auxerre's house, near the church of St. Sulspice. There she met Ontara; and it was a curious thing, in the midst of the Paris of that day, to see a girl and a youth, both totally unacquainted with the world, in the midst of which they had been suddenly thrown together, engaged, the one in teaching, the other in learning, the Christian religion. The group in Monseigneur d'Auxerre's study would have made an admirable subject for a picture. The grey-haired bishop looking kindly on the two young creatures at his feet. The dark-haired, olive-coloured youth, with his eyes fixed on the fair girl, who, half sitting, half kneeling, her hands clasped together and her soul shining through her face, translated the prelate's instructions, and by gestures and looks, as well as words, transmitted to him their meaning. It was a labour of love. The bishop had said something to the effect that Ontara would prove hereafter the future teacher of his dispersed countrymen, and she seized on the hope with enthusiasm. He would not, she felt sure, live for himself alone. He would carry to his unhappy brethren the religion which hallows suffering, and can

ennoble even the condition of a slave. His words would one day enlighten the Children of the Sun now sunk in the depths of a two-fold darkness. High and pure were the teachings of her guileless lips, and deeply did they sink into the heart of the young Indian. The aged man could scarcely restrain his tears as he looked on these children of different races, born under the same sky and endowed with such kindred natures. ‘Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength,’ he often thought, as Mina spoke and Ontara hearkened to her words.

Sometimes he was called out of the room on business, and then the brother and the sister stood at the window looking on the Luxembourg gardens, on the fountains and the lilacs; and talked of the grand forests and the waterfalls, the purple fields and fiery blossoms of their own land, their hearts throbbing with the pleasure and the pain of remembrance. These were Ontara’s only bright hours in the city of the white men. The bishop’s house appeared an oasis in what was to him a desert. The religious instruc-

tions he received there, the gradual enlightenment of his mind, the innocent affection of his adopted sister—the only tie he had in the world—gradually healed the bleeding wounds of his soul. In the afternoons, M. and Madame Maret took him to see all the sights of the capital; and in the evening they sometimes conducted him to places of public entertainment. But amusements and shows of any description had not the least attraction for him. Nothing pleased his eye except the beauties of nature. He was perfectly indifferent to art in all its shapes. But his quick intellect discerned the practical uses of mechanical inventions, and examined with interest the wonders of physical science. Many a plan Mina and he laid together; many a castle they built in the wilderness to which their thoughts were ever turning. A temple more grand than *Nôtre Dame* itself was one day to rise in an American forest, and many black robes were to dwell there, and a great Christian city to rise around it. Mina and her parents would come and live in the new City of the Sun, and the black robe would join their hands before the

Christian altar, and Ontara become the son of the white chief. Mina used always to shake her head when the closing scene of this vision was drawn. She knew now that French girls did not choose themselves whom they would marry, and she remembered her mother's saying that she must never marry an Indian. Then she wondered if his being a Christian would make a difference. And then the thought that the sight of one of his race made her father shudder, gave her exquisite pain. She felt as if her heart would break if her parents greeted him coldly.

They arrived in Paris about three weeks after the eventful evening at the Hôtel de Sénac. Madame d'Auban had been taken ill the day after her daughter's letter had so abruptly announced to her her son's death. She had been forced to stay some time at Hâvre, and then to travel by slow journeys. Her greatest desire now was, as has been said, to leave France, to break off all old associations, and carry Mina away to some place where they might begin life afresh. A vague disquietude stole over her as she noticed on her arrival the ever in-

creasing loveliness, but very delicate appearance, of her daughter. The peculiar light in her eyes was more vivid than usual; there was a spiritual beauty in her face which is seldom seen in persons of strong health—

The body tasked, the fine mind overwrought,  
With something faint and fragile in the whole,  
As though 'twere but a lamp to hold a soul.

*Mrs. Norton.*

That night, bending over her bed, her mother whispered to her, ' My beloved child, henceforth pray for the repose of your brother's soul; God has taken him out of this world . . .' Tears choked her utterance.

Mina threw her arms round her neck and murmured, ' O mother, may he rest in peace.' Thoughts of that buried brother often haunted Mina in future years. Her father was right when he had wished her not to know any thing of the secret which was never to be actually disclosed to her. Mysteries always throw a shade over the sunny days of youth.

Mina had sat between her parents on the evening of their arrival, gazing first on the one and then on the other with the deepest

tenderness. She told them Ontara had been baptized that morning. It was in the Church of St. Sulspice that the ceremony had taken place. The world had crowded to witness a novel sight ; the sacred building was filled with courtiers and women of fashion. Spy-glasses were raised, whispers exchanged, questions asked and answered round Mina d'Auban, but she heeded them not. 'Her eyes were with her heart,' and both were bent on the youth for whom she had so long and so ardently prayed. She was kneeling near the pulpit from which the Bishop of Auxerre had been preaching, and was so absorbed in her devotions that, after the whole ceremony was over, she did not notice that Madame d'Orgeville had gone into the sacristy to speak to him, and that every one had left the church except one lady, who came up to her and touched her on the shoulder. She raised her head and recognised Mademoiselle Gaultier, whose eyes were, like her own, full of tears. They had been both deeply moved in the midst of that careless crowd. Wide apart as earth and heaven were the state of their souls at

this time, but both had felt what others had not felt. There was something in common between them ; one was struggling out of the depths, the other going forward in the brightness of early morning, but both following from afar

The banner with a strange device,  
Excelsior.

‘Pray for me,’ said the actress, bending unconsciously her knee as she approached the young girl, and then disappearing before the latter had had time to recover her surprise.

People often think themselves better than they are, but it also sometimes happens that they are taken by surprise the other way. Madame d’Auban had been struggling ever since she had heard of Ontara’s arrival in Paris, to conquer her involuntary coldness towards him. She was angry with herself for her ingratitude, and imagination increasing these misgivings she dreaded showing what she had persuaded herself she felt. When Mina spoke of him there was something nervous and constrained in her manner, which increased her daughter’s sensitive apprehensions. But when, on the following

day, the young Indian suddenly entered the room, all feelings of coldness vanished at once from her mind. The scenes of her captivity rose again before her, but with them the vivid remembrance of what that youth had done for her child and herself, and she clasped him to her heart with a tenderness heightened by the reaction which had taken place in her feelings. It was some time before she could master her emotion.

Mina's visits to the bishop continued, but now her father went with her. His intimate knowledge of the Indian language enabled him to assume the task she had hitherto performed, and M. d'Auxerre in a few days confided to him the care of Ontara's instruction. He came every night to their lodgings, studied with Colonel d'Auban, and read with Mina. These were his happy hours. He began to understand the enjoyment of domestic life—the blessings of the Christian idea of home. His affection for Mina was unbounded. One day he said to her :—

‘ You are all things in one to me : my angel, for you pray for me ; my teacher, for you instruct me ; my sister, for you love me ; my

child, for I once carried you in my arms ; and one day, when I have learnt all the white men can teach, you will be my wife, and we shall live in our own land in a palace covered with roses, on the shores of the beautiful river.'

Mina did not believe in this palace in the new world, but she left off saying so when she saw it vexed Ontara ; and she was happy to see her parents so kind to him. She was no longer anxious to leave Paris. There did not seem any immediate prospect of it. Solicitation is weary work ; day after day d'Auban was disappointed of the answer he was expecting. Two out of the three months, at the end of which his wife had promised to communicate with the Comte de Saxe, had already elapsed. Mina related to her the conversation she had had with him at Madame de Sénac's. Sometimes she thought of disclosing to him her secret, and obtaining his assistance in forwarding her husband's appointment ; but as soon as the idea took the form of a resolution, it caused her indescribable apprehension. It had always been in her nature to meet with courage inevitable evils, but decisions

frightened her. She intensely wished to leave France, and only to send him her promised letter when the sea would be rolling between them. Every morning she awoke with the hope that that day would be the last of tedious suspense.

One evening at dusk, as d'Auban was walking up the stairs of the house where they lodged, he met somebody coming down, who took off his hat and passed on. He could not see who it was, but his servant Antoine, who was in the ante-room of their apartments, told him it was the German, Reinhart. He had been talking, he said, to the people of the house, and he had seen him go in and out two or three times. D'Auban was much disturbed at this intelligence. He had heard, since he was in Paris, that this man was a spy, and in the pay of whatever governments chose to employ him. He did not at all like his having traced them. Whether he was still seeking evidence about the jewels, or was on the scent of a still more important discovery, in both cases he dreaded the consequences, and began to consider if it would not be desirable to leave

Paris at once, or at least to send his wife to some place where she would be out of this man's way. One measure of prudence he thought it necessary to suggest to her: this was to pack up and hide the jewels she still possessed.

'I have nothing now of any value,' she said. 'Perhaps we had better sell what there is....'

'On no account,' he exclaimed. 'That would be most imprudent. But, my dearest, what do you mean by nothing of value? Where is the locket, with the czar's picture?'

She smiled, and said, 'I did not mean to tell you, but as you ask about it, I suppose you must needs be informed that I parted with the diamonds last September, when I wanted money to pay the doctor and our lodgings in the Rue du Louvre. Part of that sum I still have in bank notes. What is the matter?' she asked, alarmed at observing a look of annoyance in her husband's face.

'Oh, my dearest love,' he said, 'why did you not speak to me before you sold that locket?'

'I did not sell the picture, Henri, only the

diamonds. You were ill, and I was determined you should not be troubled about money matters.'

'I know. I see how it was. You are an angel of goodness. But whom did you sell them to?' d'Auban asked, trying not to seem anxious.

'To a dealer in diamonds, whose direction I got from M. Lenoir, Wisbach, a German.'

'Good heavens! an agent of the Russian Embassy. O, my own precious one, you who thought to save me anxiety! Well, but never mind. Do not be unhappy. I have no doubt it is all right.'

'But what do you fear, Henri?'

'Why, my dearest, you know that years ago in America there were enquiries made and reports circulated about your jewels having been stolen. And if these diamonds should be recognised and traced to you, no explanation can be offered but *the one . . .*'

'O, but the picture was not seen. Only the setting; only the locket . . .'

'But, my dear heart, this man Wisbach has for years and years executed all the orders for jewellery at the Imperial Court.

I should not be surprised if he had made that locket himself. Do not be frightened. I only want you to see the necessity of prudence. If you will put the picture and the trinkets together, and seal them up in a box, I will take the parcel to M. Maret, who will, I know, take charge of it for me, without enquiring as to its contents.'

Madame d'Auban, who had now become a little nervous, went to fetch a box out of her bedroom. She took out of it the miniature, and a few chains and brooches, and was just placing them in a small case, whilst her husband was lighting a candle, and looking for sealing-wax, when they were startled by a sound of steps on the stairs. She had scarcely time to thrust back all the things into the large box, before two men entered, and announcing themselves as police agents, arrested them both. One of them instantly began searching the box and the drawers in the adjoining room. The picture and the trinkets were of course discovered, and one of the men nodded to the other, and said, 'That's it.' D'Auban was confounded at the strangeness of their position.

His usual coolness and presence of mind almost forsook him in this complicated embarrassment. Under the weight of so plausible an accusation and such overwhelming evidence, the only defence that could be set up would of necessity appear an absurd invention, a preposterous lie. It seemed to him incredible at that moment that he had not more fully realised the danger hanging over them from the possession of those things. He felt stunned and bewildered. There was no time to confer with his wife on the steps they should take, or the answers they should give when separately examined, which he knew must follow. Would even his own friends believe his story? They had known him long and well, but her scarcely at all. Sooner than give credit to so improbable a story, they might deem that he had been taken in by an impostor. These thoughts passed through his mind with the quickness of lightning, for the whole scene did not last more than two or three minutes. He asked leave to write a few words to M. d'Orgeville. This was refused, with a hint that such a note might convey instructions for removing

other stolen property. They scarcely allowed Madame d'Auban time to put up a change of clothes, and to kiss her daughter. She was taken too much by surprise to be able to collect her thoughts. She could only strain her to her breast. D'Auban called Antoine, who was standing pale and trembling at the door, and said, 'Take care of her. Take her to the Hotel d'Orgeville. Tell them that through some extraordinary mistake we are accused of a crime, and thrown into prison.'

'No more talking, if you please,' said one of the police agents, and hurried them down stairs. When Madame d'Auban had reached the last step she turned round to look at her daughter, who was following her in silence; too agitated to speak, too terrified to weep.

'Mina!' she cried, as the carriage-door closed upon her. What more she said the young girl could not hear. When it had disappeared she slowly went upstairs again. Antoine was frightened at her still composed look.

'Ah! Mademoiselle Mina,' he cried, 'for God's sake do not look so. You make my heart ache. But I am sure it is no wonder.

To see monsieur and madame go off in such company, and to such a place, is enough to upset one. I am ashamed of my country, that I am. Let me get you some wine and water, mademoiselle, you are nearly fainting ?'

‘No, Antoine ; I am thinking,’ answered the child, with her head resting on her hands, and an expression of intense thoughtfulness on her brow. The colour gradually returned to her cheeks, and she breathed a deep sigh. When Antoine had brought her the wine and water, she swallowed it, and then said :

‘Where are they gone, Antoine ? I mean, to what prison ?’

The utterance of that word loosened the springs of sorrow, and Mina burst into tears. Then poor old Antoine was as anxious to stop her from crying, as he had been before that she did not cry.

‘Where—where ?’ she sobbed, whilst he stroked her hand, and kissed it.

‘To the Conciergerie,’ he said, in a low voice ; and then he added, ‘It is all a great mistake. They will come back very soon.

But we must do as your papa said, and go to the Hotel d'Orgeville.'

'No, Antoine, I am not going there; not yet, I mean.'

'And where are you then going, mademoiselle?'

'Do you know where the Comte de Saxe lives?'

'No, mademoiselle; but perhaps I can find out. But why do you want to know?'

'Because I must see him immediately—immediately, Antoine.'

Antoine shook his head. 'Monsieur said I was to take you to the Hotel d'Orgeville.'

'I won't go there till I have seen the Comte de Saxe. So it is no use asking me, Antoine. Come with me, and we will go and find out where he lives.'

Antoine was so accustomed to do whatever Mademoiselle Mina wished, and so agitated with the scene he had witnessed, that he was really more in need of guidance than she was. So he passively submitted; and when she had put on her hat and shawl he followed her into the street. She then stopped, and asked him, 'Do you think

M. Drouin, the bookseller, will know where M. de Saxe lives?’

‘Most likely he may,’ Antoine answered, and they walked there.

M. Drouin’s shop was a large dark warehouse in the Rue St. Sulspice, where piles of volumes were ranged in far-stretching recesses and apparently inaccessible shelves. Mina timidly approached the counter. A lady was sitting with her back to the entrance door, and a pretty little boy of six or seven years of age standing by her. She was choosing a book for him.

‘I don’t want a book,’ said the child; ‘I want you to stay with me.’

‘Why, my good child,’ answered the lady, in a voice Mina remembered to having heard before, ‘I can’t stay where I am and be good, and if people are not good they don’t go to heaven; and you and I, Anselm, want to meet there some day.’

‘I think you are very good,’ answered the boy, in an aggrieved tone, ‘you give me everything I want.’

At that moment, the lady heard Mina ask the shopman if he could tell her where the

Comte de Saxe lived. She turned round and their eyes met. Mademoiselle Gaultier recognised the young girl whose prayers she had asked in the Church of St. Etienne du Mont ; she made way for her with a courteous smile.

‘At the Hotel de Saxe, Rue du Palais Royal,’ the shopman answered.

‘Is it far from here?’ Mina anxiously enquired, and when the man answered, ‘pretty well,’ Mademoiselle Gaultier caught the sound of a little tremulous sigh.

‘Excuse me,’ she said, in a kind manner, to the young girl, ‘but do you want to see the Comte de Saxe?’

‘O, yes ; very, very much,’ answered Mina, ‘I must see him as soon as possible.’

‘Why *must* you see him?’ said Mademoiselle Gaultier, in a good-humoured off-hand manner.

‘Because he is the only person who can help me.’

Mademoiselle Gaultier felt in her pocket for her purse. ‘Excuse me, my dear, but is it anything about which money can be of use?’

‘No, no, thank you, it would not do any good.’ Mina turned away and was hurrying out of the shop.

‘Stop a moment,’ cried Mademoiselle Gaultier, struck with the expression of her beautiful face. ‘If it is indeed important that you should see the Comte de Saxe without delay, I can take you to my house, where he dines to-day. By the time you get to his hotel he will have left it.’

She pointed to her carriage and said, ‘Get in.’

Mina looked at Antoine, who was standing by her. ‘I *must* see the Comte de Saxe, Antoine.’

‘Then get in,’ repeated Mademoiselle Gaultier.

‘Not without me,’ said the old man, resolutely.

‘Well, sit on the box then, and tell the coachman to drive to the Rue de la Michaudière.’

The little boy got in also, and they drove off. The child began to cry bitterly.

‘Come, come, Anselm. This will never do. Men do not cry.’

‘But little boys do, and I must cry if you go away.’

‘Nonsense, I never told you I was going away. But you must go home to your father, and he will send you to a good school, where you will have plenty of little boys to play with.’

The child threw his arms round her neck.

‘There now,’ she said, when the carriage stopped, ‘kiss me, and get out.’

She watched him into the house, and then said, as if speaking to herself rather than to Mina, ‘Ah, that comes of doing a good action ; one never knows what the end of it will be. I took that child because it was motherless, and his father was too poor to keep him, and made a pet of it when it was little, as if he had been a puppy or a kitten. But when the creature began to speak and to say its prayers, and to ask me questions about the good God, I did not like it.’

‘Why not?’ said Mina, looking at her with astonishment.

‘No, what could a person who never prayed herself say to a child like that?’

‘Do you not pray? I am sure you did the day Ontara was baptized. Do not you thank God for having made you so beautiful, and so strong too?’ Mina added, remembering the scene in the Tuilleries Gardens.

It had never yet occurred to Mademoiselle Gaultier to thank God for her strength, but, some years afterwards, she remembered Mina’s words whilst carrying an aged woman out of a house that was on fire. She looked fixedly at her now, and then murmured, ‘The rest of my life will be too short to thank Him, if . . .’ there she stopped, and turning away, did not speak again till they reached her house in the Rue St. Maur.

Nothing could exceed the luxury displayed in this abode. Lovely pictures covered the walls, knick-knacks of every sort adorned every corner of it. Flowers in profusion, and little mimic fountains throwing up scented waters, perfumed the hall, and gave each room an *air de fête*. Mademoiselle Gaultier conducted Mina into a small boudoir within a dining room, where a

table, ornamented with a gilded plateau and magnificent bouquets, was laid for twenty guests. In an adjoining drawing-room several gentlemen and ladies were already assembled, who greeted its mistress in the gayest manner. One of these guests was the Comte de Saxe. When he saw Mina with Mademoiselle Gaultier he started back amazed, hesitated a moment, and then rushed after them into the boudoir.

Before any one else had time to speak Mina cried out the instant she saw him, 'Oh, M. de Saxe, save my mother.'

'Will you leave us a moment?' said the count to Mademoiselle Gaultier.

She turned round and saw that Antoine had made good his entrance, and was watching his young mistress like a faithful dog. 'Very well,' she said, and shut the door upon them.

'Now, my child,' said the count, in German, 'what is the matter? What of your mother?'

'She is in prison, and my father also,' cried Mina, wringing her hands.'

'In prison. Good God! Why? Where? For debt?'

‘No,’ answered Mina, her cheeks as red as fire, and her lip quivering. ‘For stealing diamonds! They steal! ’

‘Diamonds!’ said the count.

‘Yes, diamonds mamma has had a long time, as long as I can remember. She sold them when papa was so ill, and she wanted money. They were round a picture of a gentleman in uniform, which she sometimes showed me when I was little. The men who took papa and mamma to prison found this picture, and said it was the proof they wanted.’

‘Ah! I think I understand,’ ejaculated the count. ‘Did your father know of this picture?’

‘Yes; but he did not know till to-day, just before these men came, that mamma had sold the diamonds. He seemed sorry when she told him. Oh, M. de Saxe, you told mamma that if she ever wanted a devoted heart and a strong arm to defend her, she was to think of you. Will you help her now, and my father also?’

‘I must go to the king, there is no other way. What prison is it?’

‘The Conciergerie,’ said Antoine, stepping forward.

‘Do you know at whose instance M. and Madame d’Auban have been arrested?’

‘The huissiers said it was at the request of the Russian Ambassador.’

‘Confound him! Ah! I must begin by making sure of that point. Do you know to whom your mother sold the diamonds, Mdlle. Mina?’

‘To a man named Wisbach, in the Rue de l’Ecu.’

‘I know him; a German jeweller.’

‘Will the king let them out of prison, M. de Saxe?’

‘I hope so, my sweet child. I will do everything I can to help you. In the meantime, in whose care do you remain?’

‘His,’ said Mina, pointing to the old servant; ‘our dear, good Antoine. My father said I was to go to the Hotel d’Orgeville, and say that through some mistake they had been arrested, but—’

‘But you had much better not do so now, Mdlle. Mina. Go with this good man, wherever you live. Where is it by the way?’

‘30, Rue des Saints Pères.’

‘Well go there, and if anyone calls, let him answer that your parents are out.’

‘And if Ontara comes?’

‘Is that the Natches prince?’

‘Yes; my adopted brother.’

‘Would he be discreet?’

‘An Indian would die rather than betray a secret.’

‘Well, then, you may see him, my little princess.’

The count watched to see if that appellation made any impression on Mina, but seeing it did not, he went on—

‘Now do not weep, do not be anxious, sweet Wilhelmina. The Comte de Saxe would sooner die than evil should befall your mother.’

‘Was she the little girl you loved so much?’ Mina asked.

‘She was,’ the count answered, with emotion; ‘and she is the mother of a not very little girl, whom I am beginning to love also very much.’

‘And I shall love you very dearly, if you get papa and mamma out of prison.’

Meantime dinner was begun in the next room, and the noise of laughing and talking reached their ears. The Comte de Saxe opened the door and made his excuses to Mademoiselle Gaultier. He said that pressing business obliged him to forego her hospitality.

‘I conclude,’ he added, ‘that you will have the kindness to send this young lady home?’

‘I will see her home myself,’ answered Mademoiselle Gaultier, rising from the table.

‘Good bye, M. de Saxe,’ she added, and her voice faltered again, as it had done in the carriage, and under her rouge her cheeks turned deadly pale.

‘Come, my dear, eat something before you go,’ she said to Mina.

‘No, thank you, dear lady; I could not eat. I will drink some water, if you please.’

Mademoiselle Gaultier poured out some for her, and a glass of wine for herself. Her hand trembled so much that she spilt it. She rose, sat down again, and said to her guests :

‘I know you will excuse my treating you

with so little ceremony. I *must* go, or I would not leave you.'

Her eyes wandered round the table! she seemed to be looking at each of her friends in turn—one of them was stipulating that she should not be longer away than a quarter of an hour; another laughingly declaring they would make themselves very happy in her absence; others protesting against being deprived of her society even for five minutes. Once again she got up, took Mina by the hand, and went to the door. She stood there an instant, looking at the table she had left, at the pictures, at the furniture, with a dreamy expression. Her guests thought she was gone, and had begun again to talk and to laugh amongst themselves.

'Come,' she said to Mina, who was struck by the strangeness of her manner. 'They went downstairs and got into the carriage, which had been all this time waiting at the door. The horses were impatient and restive. The coachman whipped them, and they plunged. Mademoiselle Gaultier sprang out again, pulling Mina with her into the house. She sank on a chair in the hall, and gave a

sort of half cry, half groan, which rang through the house. The company in the dining-room heard it, and wondered what it was. They little guessed whence it proceeded.

‘I cannot,’ she murmured. ‘My God! I cannot go; the effort is too great.’

A singular instinct seemed to inspire Mina at that moment. She guessed there was a struggle between right and wrong in that woman’s heart. Without knowing what she was leaving, or where she was going, she seized her hand, and cried—

‘Come, come; Oh, do come away!’

There are moments when the whole of a person’s existence—when even their eternal destiny—seems to hang on an apparently casual circumstance; when good and bad angels are watching the upshot. Mina’s own heart was overcharged with sorrow, and she longed to get away from the sound of voices and laughter which reached them where they sat. She clung to Mdlle. Gaultier, and again said: ‘Come *now*, or you will *never* come.’ She did not know the strength of her own words. They fell on the actress’s ear with

prophetic force. Madame de Staël says, that the most mournful and forcible expression in our language is ‘no more.’ Perhaps the words ‘now or never,’ have a still more thrilling power. They have been the war-cry of many a struggle—the signal of many a victory.

Once again Mdlle. Gaultier got into the carriage with Mina, and they drove to the Rue des Saints Pères. She wept bitterly. It was odd, perhaps, that she should give thus a free vent to her feelings before a child and stranger, but she was a very singular person; a great impulsiveness—a careless frankness—had always marked her character.

‘I am very glad I met you, my dear,’ she said to her young companion, who was trying to thank her. ‘You have done more for me to-day than you can now, or than you will perhaps ever understand. It was just what I wanted to help me through the operation I am undergoing.’

‘What operation, dear lady?’

‘An operation you may have read of in the Gospel, my dear. Cutting off the right hand, and plucking out the right eye, rather

than walking into hell with them. May your sweet eyes and your little innocent feet never need plucking out and cutting off! It hurts, I can tell you !'

'I would cut off my hand, and have my eyes burnt out, if that would make all my own people Christians,' Mina answered, eagerly.

'I do not know who are your people, little one; but I have heard of innocent souls, angels in human form, glad to suffer for the guilty and the perishing, and I think you may be one of them . . . . I, too, had such thoughts when I was your age . . . .'

'And why did you let them go?' Mina said. 'I felt sure you were good the first day I saw you.'

'What could make you think so, dear child?'

'You looked good, though you did push the German lady into the mud.'

The mention of this incident caused a revulsion in Mademoiselle Gaultier's nervous system. She burst into an hysterical fit of laughter. 'What a wretch I have been,' she exclaimed; and then, after a pause, said, 'I

ought to have been good, but I was not suffered to be so. An orphan and a dependent, I prayed for a bare pittance to keep me off the stage. But my relatives would not hearken to my pleadings. They said I had beauty and wit, and must shift for myself. I have done so, God knows how !'

‘But you can, you will be good now ?’

The carriage stopped at the door of Mina’s lodgings. She threw her arms round Mademoiselle Gaultier’s neck, and said again, as she pressed her lips to her cheeks, ‘You will be good now ?’ It was like the whisper of an angel. Another voice had been urging, ‘Return to your pleasant home—to your gay friends—your luxurious life. You never can fast, obey, and pray for the rest of your life. It was the decisive hour—on the order then given to drive to one place or the other—on these few words the future turned. She bade the coachman go to the convent of the Anti-cailles. In after years, when she could afford to look back and write, with the gaiety of a grateful heart, an account of that terrible struggle, she spoke of the rude pallet on which she slept that night, of the bits of

cold stewed carp she ate for supper, and said it was the sweetest sleep, and the best meal, she had enjoyed for many a long year.

Two years later, the Parisian world flocked to the Carmelite convent of the Rue St. Jacques—the same where Louise de la Vallière had fled half a century before—to see one of the first actresses of the French stage, the witty, the handsome Mademoiselle Gaultier, put on St. Thérèsa's habit, and renounce for ever the world which had so long burnt unholy incense at her feet. She retained in the cloister the eager spirit, the indomitable gaiety, the intellectual gifts, with which she had been so rarely endowed. She spoke from behind the grate with the eloquence of former days, only the subject-matter was changed. ‘Wonders will never cease !’ the world said, at the news of Mademoiselle Gaultier's conversion, and the world was right. As long as it lasts, miracles of grace will take it by surprise.

## CHAPTER VII.

Nothing till that latest agony,  
Which severs us from nature, shall unloose  
This fixed and saered hold.

\* \* \* \* \*

I never will forsake thee.” *Johanna Baillie.*

Tones in her quivering voice awoke  
As if a harp of battle spoke ;  
Light that seem'd born of an eagle's nest  
Flashed from her soft eyes unrepress'd,  
And her form, like a spreading water-flower,  
When its frail cup swells with a sudden shower,  
Seem'd all dilated with love and pride.

*Mrs. Hemans.*

AT about six o'clock that day, his majesty Lewis the well-beloved, the idol of his people, one of the most pleasing and attractive men of his time, was sitting in his private apartments at Versailles, conversing with the queen to whom he was still devotedly attached. The young dauphin and his little sisters were playing about the room. The gentlemen in waiting brought in a letter for the king, who read it, and smiled.

‘Our good friend the Comte de Saxe,’ his

majesty said, ‘entreats the favour of an immediate interview. In order, I suppose, to pique our curiosity, he pledges himself to make known to us a history that we shall with difficulty credit, so like does it sound to a tale of fiction, but which he nevertheless declares to be perfectly true.’

‘Your majesty is always glad to see the Comte de Saxe, and will doubtless accede to his request, and direct that he be admitted.’

‘Ah! madame. Is there not some feminine curiosity lurking in your implied desire to receive the noble count?’

‘I confess, sire, that a romance in real life is well fitted to excite the interest of one whose own destiny might be described under that name.’

As she said this, Marie Leckzinska looked with tenderness at the king, whom she passionately loved.

The young monarch, for although the father of four children, Lewis the XV. was scarcely three and twenty years old, commanded the Comte de Saxe to be introduced. Like most sovereigns, the king of France liked to be treated with the cautious famili-

arity which some persons know how to use without trespassing the limits of respect. Perhaps he liked the familiarity more than the respect. The sovereign who, in his maturer years, allowed Madame Dubarry to treat him as a *laquais*, and to call him *La France*, could not have had, at any time much dignity of character; but in his youth there was something attractive in this royal *bonhomie*. The Comte de Saxe perfectly understood his royal master's disposition and tastes, and stood high in his good graces.

‘Ah! M. de Saxe,’ the king exclaimed, as the count made his obeisance to him and to the queen, ‘welcome to Versailles. Would that you took us oftener by surprise. It is one of the ennuis of our position to have no unexpected pleasures. Our life is so mapped out beforehand that I sometimes fancy to-morrow is yesterday, I know so well all about it.’

A shade of anxiety passed over the queen's face. The king's liability to ennui was her greatest trouble. She had none of the lively wit or piquancy of manner which aids a woman to retain her hold of the affection of

a man of indolent temperament and idle habits.

‘I hope,’ she said to the count, ‘that you are not about to harass our feelings too deeply by the history you are going to tell us.’

‘Ah! madame—the cause I have to plead . . . .’

‘O come!’ exclaimed the king, ‘this is not fair, you spoke of a romantic story and now hint at a petition.’

‘I have indeed a petition to make, sire, and no trifling one either—no less a one than for the immediate release of two prisoners.’

The king looked annoyed.

‘And it must be the act of your majesty; an order emanating from yourself alone.’

‘You should have spoken to M. de Fréjus.’

‘No, sire, to your majesties alone could I communicate the story of a princess of royal birth, whose unexampled destiny places her at your mercy.’

‘A princess!’ repeated the king, ‘of what nation?’

‘A German, sire.’

‘Ah! they are innumerable, your German princesses,’ Madame des Ursins said to the minister of a small Teutonic prince, who had rejected the hand of a Spanish lady of high rank. “Monsieur, une grandesse d’Espagne vaut bien une petitesse d’Allemagne.” Is your princess, M. de Saxe, une petitesse d’Allemagne?’

‘So far from it, sire,’ rejoined the count, ‘that, had she been fifteen years younger, she might have aspired to your majesty’s hand, for her sister was the wife of the Emperor of Austria, and the House of Hapsburg deemed it no mésalliance.’

‘Who can you be speaking of, M. de Saxe? What emperor do you mean? The present emperor was married to the eldest daughter of the Duke of Brunswick, Wolfenbuttel, and her sister married the Czarowitch of Russia.’

‘Sire, the sister of the late Empress of Austria, the daughter of the Duke of Brunswick, the widow of the Czarowitch, is at this moment in the prison of the Conciergerie, and it is on her behalf I have come to implore your majesty!’

‘ My dear M. de Saxe, you are under a strange delusion, for I suppose you are not joking ! ’

‘ Sire, I never was further from it in my life.’

‘ But the princess you speak of has been dead these fifteen years.’

‘ Sire, she is not dead. How she happens to be alive I did not know till two months ago, when I met her in the Tuilleries Gardens. The sound of her voice first arrested my attention ; then I caught sight of her face, and though more than sixteen years had elapsed since I had seen her, I recognised at once the Princess Charlotte of Brunswick. Sire, I had been her playmate in childhood—later, she honoured me with her friendship. I loved her as those love who can never hope to be loved in return ; with an intense hopeless, reverent affection ; she was a woman who, when once known, could never be forgotten.’

‘ I have heard my beloved father speak of her,’ said the queen. ‘ He used to say that her eyes had a melancholy beauty, a dreamy softness peculiarly their own, and that to

look upon her and to love her was the same thing.'

'Madame, I verily believe that in body and in mind so rare a creature has seldom graced a palace or a cottage. From the very moment I saw her I had not a doubt as to her identity. She turned away, she tried to put me off, to avoid answering my abrupt and eager questions; but her tears, her changing colour, her passionate emotion, betrayed her. She refused, however, to give me any clue as to the name she bore or the place of her residence. I wished to inform your majesty at once of the existence of the princess, but she extorted from me a promise to delay this disclosure for three months. When I lost sight of her that day doubts as to my own sanity occurred to me, for the death of the Czarowitch's consort was a well-known public event. All the Courts in Europe had gone into mourning for her; and the thought of the interview I had just had with the living-dead was a fact enough to drive reason from its throne. A sudden recollection flashed then on my brain. I remembered

having seen amongst my mother's papers, when I was sorting them after her death, a packet, on which was written, "particulars relating to the supposed death of —. To be read by my son after my decease." Pressed as I was at that moment by a multiplicity of affairs, I put off opening this packet to a period of greater leisure. The events of the campaign and my return to Paris put it out of my mind, until suddenly the words "supposed death" flashed across me like a ray of light. I wrote for the box in which I had left this packet, and only a few days ago made myself acquainted with its contents.'

'And did it relate to the princess?' eagerly asked in the same breath, the king and the queen.

'It did, madame, and, sire—if my mother erred, if she acted with precipitation, if she allowed her fears for the life of a beloved friend to get the better of her prudence, now that she is no more, your majesties will pity and excuse a woman's pity for a woman. I know not how to judge an unprecedented action. Unwonted dangers call for extraordinary remedies. This paper, sire, gives a

full account of the manner in which the Comtesse de Konigsmark, in conjunction with the attendants of the Czarowitch's consort, spread the report of her decease after her brutal husband had left her apparently dead. It was well known to the princess's friends that Alexis had resolved on her destruction, and that assassins were at hand to do his work in case she recovered. They placed a wooden figure in the coffin ostensibly prepared for the princess, and tended her in a secluded chamber until she had strength enough to make her escape from Russia, and the doom which awaited the Czarowitch's wife. In a separate letter my mother lays her commands upon me not to divulge these facts unless a time should come when the princess might desire to establish her identity. I have brought these documents with me, sire, and I place in your majesty's hands the evidence of my mother's daring act, and of the existence of the Princess Charlotte of Brunswick.'

‘This is indeed a wonderful history,’ said the king as he began to peruse the papers.

The queen in the meantime asked, ‘And

where did the princess fly when she left Russia?

‘To the new France, madame, accompanied by one only servant and humble friend—the librarian of her father’s court, who had followed her to St. Petersburgh.’

‘And how comes she here? and good heavens! did not you say she was in prison?’

‘Madame, she was arrested this morning, at the instance of the Russian embassy. It seems that when she escaped from St. Petersburgh, she carried away with her jewels which were her own private property, and sold a part of them on her arrival at New Orleans. These trinkets, of course, were missed, and orders given at the Russian embassies and consulates to institute enquiries as to the persons who were supposed to have taken them. Suspicion rested principally on one individual, who had disappeared at the time of the princess’s supposed death, the old German librarian who had accompanied her in her flight. It does not seem however that the enquiry was actively followed up in the colony; but a bracelet, which the princess sold since her

arrival in Paris, has been recognised by a jeweller who many years ago had himself executed the order for it. In conjunction with a German who had seen the royal exile in America, and was aware of the suspicions afloat on the subject, he gave information to Prince Kourakin of the discovery he had made. Hence, the princess's arrest on a charge which places her amongst felons and thieves, unless his majesty interposes at once to rescue her from such a position.'

The king looked up from the papers he had been perusing, and made the count repeat again the foregoing details. Then he said, 'Of course, the princess must be at once released. These documents, M. de Saxe, leave no doubt on my mind that the lady you recognised in the Tuileries Gardens is the same person the Comtesse de Konigsmark speaks of, the widow of the late Czarowitch. But what sort of existence has she led during all these late years? Where did she live, and with whom?'

'Sire,' said the count, in the tone of a man who makes a reluctant confession, 'the romance would not be complete without a love story.'

‘Ah,’ said the king laughing, ‘is it one that you can relate before the queen?’

‘Sire,’ said the Comte de Saxe, with some emotion, ‘I know but little of the Princess Charlotte’s history during those years of obscure seclusion. But I would willingly lay down my life, that her heart is as pure and her life as unstained as that of her majesty herself,’ he added, bowing profoundly to Marie Lekzinska. Since the Czarowitch’s decease, sire, his widow has married a French gentleman, and a brave man, who at the time of the Natches insurrection, by prodigies of valour saved her and many other French women from the horrors of a lingering death.’

Without uttering an untruth, the count had managed to make it appear that the marriage had followed instead of preceded this heroic exploit. Gratitude, he thought, might be considered as a *circonstance atténuante*.

‘I do not see,’ said the king, ‘how that difficulty can be got over. Such a marriage can never be acknowledged by her relations. Are there children?’

‘One girl, sire.’

The king reflected a little, and then said, ‘I will write with my own hand a letter to the Queen of Hungary, and inform her of her aunt’s existence and of the proofs which establish it. If I judge by my own feelings she will gladly offer to receive her at her own court, and to provide for her in her dominions a home suitable to her rank. She must, of course, give up this second husband. I forget if you mentioned his name?’

‘Colonel d’Auban, sire.’

‘This d’Auban she must, of course, separate from; but as you say he is a brave officer, I will take care of his fortune and place him in a good position. The daughter can be educated at St. Cyr.’

The queen looked anxiously first at M. de Saxe and then at the king. Her woman’s heart evidently shrunk from this summary disposal of the nearest and dearest ties of a woman’s heart. She ventured to say, ‘But if this princess is attached to her husband and her child, would it not be possible—’

‘Possible, madame, for the Queen of Hungary to call M. d’Auban uncle, and his

daughter cousin ! Heaven forbid that any royal family should admit of such a degradation—'

‘No ; what I meant was that perhaps she would not give them up.’

‘Then, of course, her family could not acknowledge her.’

M. de Saxe was growing very impatient at this lengthened discussion, and ventured to say :

‘Sire, every moment must appear an age to the princess, who has already been many hours in prison.’

‘But what would be the best course to pursue ?’ answered the king. ‘This strange story must not be divulged until I receive the answer of the Queen of Hungary. It would not be just to her royal relatives to forestall their decision as to the Princess Charlotte’s reassumption of her name and position. But she cannot, of course, remain in prison, or in a mean lodging. She had better be instantly removed from the Conciergerie to one of our royal palaces — to Fontainebleau, for instance, and there await her niece’s answer. But how can this release be explained to the Russian embassy ?’

‘ Will your majesty permit me to call on Prince Kourakin, and to inform him that it is your royal pleasure that the prosecution be abandoned ? ’

‘ He will think it strange that I should interfere.’

‘ Not so strange, perhaps, as your majesty supposes. I am greatly mistaken if there is not one person at least at the embassy who suspects the truth.’

‘ Ah ! think you so, M. de Saxe ? Then I commend to your prudence that part of the negotiation. I must see M. de Fréjus, and give orders under our signet to remove this royal lady to our palace of Fontainebleau. Madame d’Auban, is not that the name she goes by ? Well, M. de Saxe, it must be admitted that you have redeemed your pledge, and unfolded to us as romantic a tale as the pages of history or of fiction have ever recorded. We will not detain you any longer, M. le Comte. As Hermione says to Pyrrhus :—

Tu comptes les instants que tu perds avec moi ;  
Ton cœur impatient de revoir ta Troyenne,  
Ne souffre qu’à regret qu’une autre t’entretienne ;  
Tu lui parles du cœur, tu la cherches des yeux.

Ah ! how inimitably Mdlle. Gaultier repeats those lines. By the way, is it true that Hermione is about to retire from the stage and the world ? M. de Fréjus says she will be a Carmelite.'

' And so will I, my papa king,' said a little voice from behind the queen's fauteuil. This was Madame Louise de France, then only two years old. Thirty years later she was kneeling at her father's feet to obtain leave to live and die behind the grate of the monastery of St. Denis. The king took her on his knees, and played with her whilst he went on talking to the Comte de Saxe.

' You must leave with me the Comtesse de Konigsmark's letters. I must forward a copy of her statement to the Queen of Hungary. Who knows, M. le Comte, if we hunt this week in the direction of Fontainebleau, and very probably we shall,' the king said, with a laugh, ' that we may not visit this fair spectre ? '

' I should also very much like to see her, if it would not attract too much notice,' the queen said. ' I used to hear so much in my childhood of the Princess Charlotte of Brunswick and her beautiful blue eyes.'

‘Your majesty will graciously include in the order of release the princess’s husband?’ asked the Comte de Saxe, as he was taking his leave.

‘Yes, yes,’ the king gaily answered; ‘but he is not to come to Fontainebleau, or his daughter either. Princesses cannot marry commoners and enjoy at the same time the privileges of royalty.’

‘And what happens if they like commoners better than privileges?’ said Madame Victoire, the eldest of the *Enfants de France*.

‘They are in disgrace,’ his majesty answered, with a smile.

‘Is M. de Saxe a commoner, and are you, sire, a privilege?’

The Queen ordered Madame Victoire to be silent, and said something tantamount to little pitchers having long ears. At last M. de Saxe was suffered to depart. He was not quite satisfied at the turn things had taken. From his brief interview with the Princess, and what he had seen of her daughter, he had a strong impression

That ties around her heart were spun  
Which could not, would not be undone.

The king, though in the main good-natured and kind-hearted, did not like contradiction. Who does but those who, through a long training, have overcome their distaste to it? The order for Madame d'Auban's removal to Fontainebleau, pending the answer of her relatives, sounded somewhat like an honourable imprisonment. He dreaded the suffering she might undergo from the anomalies in her position, and the uncertainty of the future. Would she blame him for disclosing her story to the king? Not; he supposed, under the circumstances which had compelled him to do so; but women are not always reasonable. The count felt anxious and out of humour with the king, the princess, the world, and himself. Men of prodigious strength and strong will, who can conquer almost everything except themselves, get as irritated with complicated difficulties as women with an entangled skein of silk. They long to cut through the knot, but if they have not at hand either knife or scissors there remains nothing for it but to chafe at the obstacle.

It was near twelve o'clock at night when

the count arrived at the prison door, and with great trouble succeeded in rousing the porter and obtaining an entrance. Mentioning his own name, and slipping a louis d'or into his hand, he asked for news of the prisoners who had arrived there that day. The sight of gold awakened the attention of the sleepy Cerberus, who produced a book of entries, which was kept in the entrance lodge.

‘Yes,’ he said, turning over the leaves till he found the last page, and running his finger down it, ‘here are the names of the people you are speaking of, M. de Saxe. Henri George d'Auban and Sophia Charlotte his wife. They were lodged in separate cells in the fifth ward of the third story.’

‘I must see them directly,’ said the count. ‘I have the king's order to that effect. Let the governor of the prison know that I am here.’

‘I am very sorry,’ said old Adam, tightly clutching the gold piece in his hand, ‘but your excellency cannot see them, for—’

‘I will see them,’ cried the Count Saxe.

‘But it is impossible, for—’

‘Nothing is impossible,’ said the count, stamping. ‘My soldiers are never allowed to use that word, neither shall you. Take your keys and show me the way to the governor or the prisoners’ rooms.’

‘But when I tell you, M. le Comte—’

‘And I tell you, M. le Guichetior, that I will take no denial.’

‘Then,’ cried the man, ‘you must quarrel with the good God, and not with me; for he can work miracles and I can’t.’

‘Miracles! nonsense! Show me the way.’

‘But I tell you, sir, they are gone!’ roared out the man, who had now slipt into his pocket the count’s louis d’or.

‘Gone! The devil they are! Where?’

‘I don’t know.’

‘How came they to be released?’

‘The governor ordered them to be set at liberty about three hours ago, that’s all I know. I never ask questions about those that come in or those that go out.’

Exceedingly puzzled, but at the same time relieved, the count withdrew. Early on the following morning he ordered his carriage and drove to the lodging of which Antoine

and Mina had given him the direction on the preceding day. Having ascertained from the concierge that this was the house where M. and Madame d'Auban lived, and that they were at home, he rapidly mounted the stairs and rang at the door of the entresol, which was opened by a tall, careworn, but still handsome man, whom he guessed must be Henri d'Auban.

‘Am I speaking to Colonel d’Auban?’ he asked; and immediately added, ‘I am the Comte de Saxe.’

D’Auban eagerly invited him in, and said, ‘I know how very very kind you have been to my daughter, M. le Comte, and most glad I am to have the opportunity of thanking you. Pray come into the next room and sit down.’

Mina was giving Ontara a French lesson. She jumped up, and eagerly greeting the Comte de Saxe, said, ‘They came home last night. I had watched at the window till I fell fast asleep on the chair; and it was mamma’s kisses which woke me.’

‘May your wakings be ever as sweet, Mademoiselle Wilhelmina.’

At that moment Madame d’Auban came

in from the back room. She was taken by surprise and hesitated an instant; then holding out her hand to the count, she said, 'Oh Maurice! that child has told me how good you have been to her, and what you meant to do for us.'

'May I speak?' answered the count, glancing at Mina and Ontara, who had returned to their books.

'Come in here,' said Madame d'Auban, leading the way to the back room, and making a sign to her husband to follow.

But he shook his head and whispered, before closing the door upon them, 'Speak to him without restraint, dearest heart. He knows the truth, and will advise you.'

'Oh, Maurice!' she exclaimed, sinking down on a chair, while he stood by the chimney looking at her with the tenderest pity, 'it has been very dreadful. I thought I should have gone out of my mind yesterday, during those terrible hours at the Conciergerie. The expectation of being examined on that strange charge, not knowing what I could answer, and knowing no one to consult.'

‘But how on earth came you to be released, dearest princess, before the arrival of the king’s order, which I went to Versailles to solicit?’

‘Good heavens! Maurice, have you told him about me?’

‘I was compelled to do so, princess. There seemed no other possible way of getting you out of prison.’

‘What did he say?’

‘I will tell you presently,’ said the count, feeling some embarrassment in entering on that question. ‘But how were you released?’

There was some slight noise on the stairs which made Madame d’Auban start.

‘I am afraid of everything,’ she said, ‘since yesterday—each time I hear a step, or the door opens, I tremble. There is one other person besides you who knows about me, and I conclude it was through his means we were set at liberty. This note was given to me when I left the prison.’

She took a note out of her bag, and gave it to the count to read.

‘Ah!’ he said, glancing at the signature,

‘Alexander Levacheff! I thought as much A short while ago—since I saw you in the Tuilleries, princess—I purposely spoke to him one day of my early acquaintance with your royal highness, and in his manner I saw something which made me suspect he knew the truth.’

‘He saw me in America many years ago, and recognised me. I obtained from him an oath of secrecy. Read what he says’—

‘MADAME,—Bound by the promise you extorted from me, I dare not rush to your feet to offer you my services. It was but a few days ago that I ascertained you were in Paris. I only arrived here myself a month ago. Imagine my feelings when I was informed of your arrest. I had been absent for a few days, and accidentally heard it spoken of in our Chancellerie. The blood froze in my veins. You! Princess! consigned to a prison! You, the associate of low-born and guilty wretches! You accused and persecuted! and by whom? By those who might once, but for untoward events, have been your subjects! By the repre-

sentative of your own sister-in-law! Madame, I did not betray your secret; but, to stop those infamous proceedings, I hinted to Prince Kourakin that there was a mystery in this affair which he would do well to respect, for it could not be solved without dangerous disclosures. He took fright, God be praised, and withdrew the charge. Do not let it be a source of uneasiness to your royal highness, but rather of comfort—that there is in this town one heart that owns allegiance to you—one man who would fain proclaim before the world, if permitted to do so, the sentiments he cherishes for the most perfect of women and the noblest of princesses.

‘ ALEXANDER LEVACHEFF.’

‘ You see, Maurice,’ said Madame d’Auban, ‘ that my existence would soon become known if I remained in Europe. I wish to leave Paris as soon as possible.’

‘ This, of course, must depend, princess, on the views you have as to the future. The king is mightily interested by your story, and bent, I perceive, on bringing

about your restoration to your rank and family. A messenger is already gone to the Queen of Hungary, bearing a letter from his majesty, in which he informs her of your royal highness's existence and return to Europe. His Majesty has also ordered that an apartment be prepared for you at the palace of Fontainebleau, whither, I believe, it is his wish you should forthwith remove, and where he intends himself secretly to pay you his respects. Not that I am authorised to say so, or to convey any direct message to your royal highness.'

Madame d'Auban coloured deeply, and said, 'And my husband and my child?'

'Ah! there is the difficulty. The king would provide for them in the most ample and generous manner on condition that your royal highness consented to separate from them.'

'To separate myself from them,' she slowly repeated. 'To give *them* up, and oh, good God! for what?' 'No,' she said, starting up, with a vehemence which astonished the Comte de Saxe in that gentle creature, whose voice and eyes were sweetness itself.

‘No, you do not say — you do not mean that the king said that. You would not dare to repeat such words to a wife! a mother! a princess! I have gone through much and terrible suffering. By a royal husband and by the savages of the New World I have been treated as a slave. I have looked death in the face in the palace and at the stake. I have drunk the cup of humiliation to the dregs, and but yesterday was consigned to a felon’s cell ; but there is one trial, Maurice, which I think a merciful God will spare me. He will not suffer the great ones of the earth to lay again their iron hands on my heart, to tread under foot its strongest affections, and insult me with such an offer as the horrible one you have just mentioned. No, let me depart in peace, and ask nothing at their hands. For one moment, when you said the king knew my history, a thought crossed me—a sort of yearning wish to see once more those kindred faces, to hear the sound of voices whose tones have often haunted me ; but no, there are no ties, no sympathy between us now. I am nothing to them but a name they will

deem I have disgraced. I died in the palace where my young life was blighted. Let them think of me as buried in the same grave as my forsaken boy. Go and tell the King of France that Charlotte of Brunswick is no more. That the woman you spoke of yesterday is the wife of a poor gentleman, and owns no name but his.'

'Be calm, dearest princess, be calm,' cried the count, himself much agitated.

'Calm! when you spoke of giving *them* up,' she said, pointing to the next room.

'But I did not advise you to do so, princess. If you do not desire to return to your relatives —'

'My relatives! Ah! when they married me to the Czarowitch they parted from me for ever. Why should the ghost of my former self haunt their palaces again?'

'I feel sure,' said the count, 'that when the king understands your feelings and wishes, he will not place you under any restraint, or compel you to part with your husband.'

A deadly paleness spread over Madame d'Auban's face. The words of the count, which were meant to reassure her, in her

excited state of mind, awoke her fears. She remained a moment silent, and then said with an unnatural calmness, ‘I have been foolishly agitated, M. de Saxe. Important decisions need to be maturely weighed. No one ought to trust to their first impressions. Will you convey to the king my humble thanks for his majesty’s kindness, and say that I commend myself to his clemency, and crave permission not to avail myself, at present at least, of his majesty’s gracious permission to reside in one of his royal palaces. Or stay: as you were not charged with any direct message to me from the king, let it be supposed, M. de Saxe, that no communication has been made to me—no intimation given of his majesty’s gracious intentions. I need repose after the emotions and fatigues of yesterday, and I would rather not see even you, M. de Saxe, for a little while —’

‘Certainly, princess, I will not intrude upon you again till you wish it. But you will permit me to send to-morrow to enquire after your health?’

She bowed her head and said — ‘You

have been very kind to me and mine, M.  
de Saxe, from my heart I thank you.'

The count saw that utterance was failing her. He respectfully kissed her hand and withdrew. As he passed through the front room he took a friendly leave of d'Auban and Mina, and in the afternoon went to Versailles to inform the king of the spontaneous abandonment of the charge against the princess, and the particulars of his interview with her.

The instant the door had closed upon him, Madame d'Auban called her husband into her room, and, laying her icy cold hand on his, said—

‘ Henri, we must go away at once. The king knows all, and he has spoken of our parting. I am terrified, Henri; I will not stay another day in Paris.’

‘ Not half a day, if possible, my own love. But surely the king would not, could not force you against your will to part from me.’

‘ Henri, there are such things as *lettres de cachet*. There are also gilded dungeons, where, under pretence of doing honour to a guest, a woman may be doomed to endless

misery. He wanted me to go to Fontainebleau—without you, without Mina. I should have been taken there at once from the prison if we had not been released before the royal order arrived. I am frightened, Henri. I cannot help thinking of the English princess Arabella Stuart, and of the Duc de Lauzun sent to Pignerol for aspiring to the hand of the Grande Mademoiselle ?'

‘No, not altogether for that reason, dearest. But tell me, have you confidence in the Comte de Saxe ?’

‘He means well ; but I trust no one. Let me leave Paris.’

D’Auban saw that his wife’s nerves had given way under the pressure they had undergone, and that nothing but an immediate departure would calm her. He did not himself feel any of the alarm she was seized with. It seemed to him evident, indeed, that she would have to choose between him and her child and the notice of royalty and the re-establishment of her position in the eyes of the world. Still, both for the sake of her tranquillity and as a measure of prudence, he deemed it best to

acquiesce in her desire, and for them to withdraw at once from the smiles or the frowns of royalty. He reflected for an instant, and then said :—

‘ I am of opinion, my best love, that you and Mina should start at once for the Chateau de la Croix. My old friend has begged us most urgently to pay him a visit before we leave France ; he has set his heart on seeing Mina. If I write by the next messenger, he will receive my letter in time to prepare for your arrival. Nobody here will know where you are gone. I will follow you as soon as I have finished some absolutely necessary arrangements, and we can sail from Marseilles to the Isle de Bourbon. As soon as you are gone I will give up these lodgings and leave no direction. If you will pack up a few things for your journey, dearest, I will take you to the Couvent des Anglaises, where you can stay till I have ascertained the hour when the Lyons diligence starts. In three days I hope you will be in the old castle in the Forez, where nobody will dream of looking for you, my pale, sweet love.’

Saying this, he pressed his wife to his

heart. She tenderly returned his caresses, and said :

‘ Oh! how much more freely shall I breathe when I have left Paris behind, and still more when the waves are rolling between France and us. I begin to feel that I have been foolish, Henri. The king has no interest in forcing me back into my former position, and if he had, he is not a wicked tyrant, like the English Queen Elizabeth. God help him ; perhaps, when he made the suggestion that almost drove me out of my senses, he thought he was doing me a kindness. Of course, his power, or that of my relatives, could reach us in Bourbon as well as here ; but when they find we desire nothing at their hands—that we only wish to be forgotten, they will not renew offers which are a pain and an insult. But will you wait till you get the promised appointment, Henri ? ’

This was said with an anxiety which made him answer at once :

‘ No, dearest, I have letters to the Governor of Bourbon which will, I hope, secure my obtaining some small post in the island. At all events, we can live cheaper at St.

Denys than at Paris,' he added, with a smile, as he saw her face brightening up with the prospect of a speedy departure. 'Poor Mina,' she said, 'how grieved she will be to part with Ontara, and so suddenly, too. Will you break it to the poor child?'

D'Auban went into the room where his daughter and her adopted brother were reading together. He laid his hand on her shoulder and called her away.

'My Mina,' he said, folding his arms around her, 'you were a courageous little girl when you went to look for the Comte de Saxe, and now you must show another kind of courage.'

She looked up in his face and smiled, but he felt that a thrill ran through her slight frame.

'For reasons you cannot as yet understand, your mother cannot remain here any longer. She must leave this house in an hour, and Paris this evening. Antoine will go with you.'

'Not you, papa?'

'I shall join you in a few days, and then we shall all leave France.'

The child smiled again, and though tears stood in her eyes, she resolutely forced them back, and kissed her father without speaking a word. He beckoned to Ontara.

‘My dear son,’ he said, as he made him sit down by their side. ‘Strange and sudden events compel us to depart at once from my native land. There is no abiding place for us in this world, Ontara. We are wanderers, like you, on the face of the earth; but the day will come, please God, when we shall meet again in a home of our own.’

‘May not Ontara say to you, the white chief he loves as a father, what the daughter of Moab said to her dead husband’s mother? —“Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee. May not your people be his people, even as your God has become his God?”’

‘No, dear youth,’ d’Auban answered, ‘it may not be so now. Your duty is to stay for the present with your kind protector M. Maret, and to continue the studies which will enable you to pursue whatever path in life Providence may mark out for you. But wherever we have a home that home will be

yours, dear Ontara, and under a foreign sky, and in scenes equally new to us all, we shall, I trust, meet again in a very few years. And now, my children, I must leave you, for there is much to be done ere I return. My Mina, you and your mother will be gone from this house, but I shall see you in the afternoon at the Couvent des Anglaises.'

Ontara did not speak at first. He was like a person stunned by a sudden blow. Mina had stood him in stead of country, and kindred, and friends ; he seemed to have concentrated upon her all the feelings of which his heart was capable, and young as she was she fully understood their strength and depth, and returned his affection with a love which was made up of gratitude, enthusiasm, pity and admiration. In him she saw the representative of the North Indian race, and of the land where they had both been born. She had not shed a tear in her father's sight but now she wept bitterly. He gave no outward signs of grief, but, in a grave tone of voice and a fixed earnest gaze, he said :

‘ When we parted in the forest on that

dark night when I gave you back to your father, you made me a promise, Wenonah ; will you renew it now ?'

' Yes, I will, Ontara. Unless I am compelled to it, I will never marry a white man. I will never marry at all.'

' Nay, but will you be my wife ? The rainbow of my life ; the day-star of my dark sky ? The Rachel for whom I will work for seven years, if need be, oh, daughter of the white men.'

' No, my brother, that can never be. The daughters of white men, every one says so, do not marry their Indian brethren. They may love them as I do ; they may be willing to die for them as I would for you and for your people, Ontara ; but white fathers and mothers will not let them be your wives, and I do not wish to be a wife. I wish to be your sister.'

' And will you then always be my sister ? and when I come to the home your father speaks of shall we finish the book we have been reading ?'

' Oh, yes ! ' cried Mina, holding out her hand for the volume. ' See, I turn down the

page where we left off.' It was the life of Father Claver, the apostle of the negroes.

'I bought a copy of it this morning; here it is, will you write something in it?'

She took up a pen, and with an unsteady hand she wrote, 'Go and do thou likewise.'

'There,' she said, 'when we parted in the forest we did not think we should meet again in a great room full of fine people; and perhaps some years hence we shall see each other again in some place we do not know of now.'

'My child, the coach is waiting,' said her mother, who was counting the minutes in her eagerness to be gone. Mina hastily placed her few possessions in a straw basket Ontara had made for her. He had learnt the art from a Canadian *courieur des bois*. Madame d'Auban took an affectionate leave of the young Indian. Mina could not speak, her heart was too full. As the carriage rolled off she saw him watching them down the long narrow streets, even as he had once before watched her down the green vista of the moonlit grove, and she turned round to her mother, and said,

‘Mamma, is life as full of changes for every one as it is for us?’

‘No, my child,’ was the answer, ‘the destinies of men are as various as their faces. It seems to be God’s will that we should have no abiding home on earth. What must we say, love?’

‘His will be done,’ answered the child, laying her head on her mother’s bosom; ‘but, mother, I think the best name for heaven is, “the place where there are no partings.”’

## CHAPTER VIII.

With delicate hand and open brow  
 Like Parian marble fair,  
 Know ye him not? 'Tis Tracy de Vere,  
 The baron's beautiful heir.

'Tis Tracy de Vere, the castle's pride,  
 The rich, the nobly born,  
 Pacing along the sunlit sod,  
 With the step of a playful fawn.

There's a haleyon smile spread o'er his face  
 Shedding a bright and radiant grace;  
 There's a sweetness of sound in his laughing tones,  
 Betraying the gentle spirit he owns.

He teaches her how to note the hours  
 By where the sunbeams rest;  
 He wades for her where the virgin flowers  
 Gracefully bend 'neath the cascade's showers,  
 To pluck the whitest and best.

He tells her the curious legends of old  
 Known by each mountaineer;  
 He tells her stories of ghost and fay,  
 Waking her wonder and fear.

*Eliza Cook.*

Then pray for a soul in peril,  
 A soul for which Jesus died;  
 Ask by the cross that bore him,  
 And by her who stood beside.  
 And the angels of God will thank you,  
 And bend from their throne of light,  
 To tell you that Heaven rejoices  
 At the deed *you have done to-night.*

*Adelaide Proctor.*

THERE had been a longstanding traditional friendship, and more than one intermarriage, between the family of the de la Croix's and that of Henri d'Auban. In the preceding century the heads of both families had been zealous partisans of the League, and had fought side by side under the command of Guise and Joyeuse. D'Auban's grandfather had made considerable pecuniary sacrifices to ransom from captivity the father of the present Baron de la Croix ; and when peace was made and the fortunes of his friend re-established, he would never consent to be reimbursed. The memory of this debt of gratitude had been bequeathed by old Pierre de la Croix to his son as a sacred legacy. And though the meetings between the present representatives of these two families had been few and far between, when they did take place nothing could exceed the friendliness and cordiality of their relations. Baron Charles was an excellent man, and a kind one, too, notwithstanding a certain abruptness of tone which betokened a more habitual intercourse with inferiors and dependents than with his equals. He had not what was then called

‘l’air de la cour.’ But in his manner to women there was a courtesy which savoured of the days of chivalry. Since he had been made Provost of the Forez, a slight pomposity of language and demeanour marked the good old man’s sense of his exalted position and arduous responsibility. His defects were skin deep, not so his virtues. M. de Maistre used to say, ‘Grattez le Russe, vous trouvez le Tartare.’ It might have been said of the baron, ‘Grattez le tyran, vous trouvez le père;’ for, whilst he rated his tenants in the blustering fashion he had learnt as a youth in camps, and apparently governed his family in a despotic manner, it was generally supposed that not only his submissive-looking wife, the picture of a chatelaine of the seventeenth century, and his handsome daughter-in-law, the widow of his only son, could do with him what they liked; but that his daughters, the twin sisters, merry pretty Bertha and the grave and sedate Isaure, turned him round their slender fingers with very little difficulty. As to M. le Chevalier, who, had he not turned round his fingers in that old

castle since the day that five weeks after his father had been killed at the siege of Luneville, he opened his eyes on a world which as yet had not proved to him one of trouble. This young gentleman was eighteen years of age, and had never known a greater sorrow than leaving home for the college where he had just finished his studies; or the loss of a favourite pointer which had died a few days before that on which he rode out with his grandfather and some of their tenants to meet Madame and Mademoiselle d'Auban, who were to arrive at the neighbouring town of Montbrison in the course of the afternoon. The woods of the Forez had been lately infested with robbers, forming part of Mandrin's famous gang, and the baron deemed it prudent to send his carriage and four to meet the travellers, and to escort them himself on their way to the castle, a distance of about fifteen miles. The Chevalier Raoul was delighted at the prospect of visitors. A more light-hearted young gentilhomme could not easily have been found in the light-hearted land of France; his black eyes had an expression of good-humoured espiéglerie, and

his laugh an irresistibly contagious merriment which bewitched old and young.

As he made his horse curvet and plunge in the entrance court whilst the detachment was getting under weigh, his sisters stood at the window kissing their hands, and Bertha said to Isaure,

‘How carefully Raoul has powdered his hair to day; and he has put on his most becoming coat, sister. I suspect grandpapa has let the cat out of the bag.’

‘What cat and what bag?’ asked Isaure, who had her wits less about her than her twin sister.

‘If you have not guessed I will not tell you, my sweet Isaure. I believe that when M. le Curé publishes the banns of marriage between Isaure de la Croix and Roger d’Estourville, you will ask in that same dreamy manner, “Who is it that is to be married come next Midsummer?”’

‘Giddy girl,’ said Isaure, blushing and laughing. ‘No fear that every body will not know in and round the castle when your wedding is at hand. Ah me! was there ever such a wagging tongue or so blithe a

heart as yours. You and Raoul ought to have been born on the same day—not you and I, sister.'

'There they go,' cried Bertha, as the cavalcade went out at the porter's gate. 'Grandpapa is never so pleased as when he has an excuse for calling out his body-guard; and M. le Chevalier will not be sorry to show off that grey steed in the eyes of the ladies.'

'Come into the parterre, Isaure. We will gather an immense bouquet of roses for the guest chamber, and lavender and rosemary to scent the drawers.'

'How I wish it was autumn, that we might fill the grape baskets for the bedroom tables.'

'It is like you, Isaure, to like autumn better than spring, and fruit than flowers.'

'We might get a few early strawberries, perhaps, which, in a corbeille with green moss, would look pretty.'

'I have a mind to make a wreath of violets like the one you wore at Marianne's wedding last week, and put it on the low toilet table.'

‘ Does not mama want you in the store-room ? ’

‘ No, she and grandmama are there as busy as two bees. They say they do not want a buzzing-fly like me.’

‘ Well, go and get your violets, and I will to the strawberry-bed, and take all the ripe ones in spite of gardener grand Louis’s cross looks.’

‘ But do not before your task is half done, pull a book out of your pocket, and sit down like an idle girl in the orchard. Ever since Roger called you Clémence Isaure you are never without a book in your hand. And I do not feel sure that you do not write verses.’

‘ Fie, Bertha, how can you say such a thing ? ’

‘ Well, I would if I could. It’s a sort of singing.’

And one sister went in search of flowers, and carolling like a bird, and the other knelt besides the strawberry bed, filling her basket and repeating the while in a low voice lines which she had made the day her parents told her she was to marry Roger d’Estour-

ville, with whom she had once danced a minuet, and who had picked up a rose she had dropped, as he led her back to her seat. In those olden times many a little romance was mixed up with the formalities of marriages of *convenance*, as they were called in France, and a young girl was sometimes agreeably surprised by the order to accept as a husband one whom she had timidly loved from her childhood, or had fallen in love with at first sight, during a brief interview under the eyes of her parents. It does not seem clear when we study their lives that women loved their husbands less or were less loved by them in the days of Lady Russell, Lady Derwentwater, Lady Nithsdale, Madame de Montmorency, or Madame La Roche Jacquelin, than in our own.

The baron and his son had been for some time standing under the shade of the plane trees, in the promenade at Montbrison, when the Paris diligence arrived in sight. As it stopped at the door of the inn, M. de la Croix went to the carriage-door to greet Madame d'Auban and her daughter. He

informed her in a set speech that he had considered it a duty as well as a pleasure to offer her the protection of his escort from Montbrison to his chateau, the roads and woods having been lately infested by robbers, although it was to be hoped that the measures he had taken, as Provost of the Forez, had dispersed the gang and ensured public safety. He then conducted her to his carriage and four, which was drawn up on the other side of the place, and calling his grandson, he said, ‘Permit me to introduce to you the chevalier Raoul de la Croix.’ The chevalier’s black eyes met Mina’s blue orbs ; if ever a youth of eighteen fell in love at first sight with a girl of thirteen, the baron’s grandson did so on that sunny afternoon in June under the plane trees of Montbrison, as he handed into his grandfather’s carriage, Mademoiselle Wilhelmina d’Auban. He mounted his grey horse and rode on one side of the stately old coach, the baron on the other, and their retainers before and behind it. A pleasant change it was for travellers weary of the high road, its noise, and its dust, to be rolling along the green natural

avenues of a forest, resting on soft cushions, with no noise in their ears but the light tramp of the horses' feet, and no glare to hurt their eyes now that the noonday rays were shining through the branches of the overarching trees.

Madame d'Auban felt carried back to the days of her youth. She could fancy herself emerging from the gates of the palace at Wolfenbuttel, and driving through the green woods of its domain. She thought of the other Wilhelmina who had then sat by her side, and had a little difficulty in attending to the baron as he rode and talked with her at the carriage-window. Mina was delighted at the novelty of the scene. The sound of the postillions' horns, the rapid motion, the horses and the riders, the vistas of woodland scenery—the graceful gambols of two large dogs who formed part of the cortége, pleased and amused the little girl, who had been so long amidst painful or uncongenial scenes. Once as a fine extent of country opened to view, the chevalier pointed to it with his whip, and bent forward his head to see if she had taken notice of it. She smiled, and

from that moment he found many opportunities of directing her attention to objects of interest on the road ; sometimes to a deer bounding across the glade, or to a group of children gathering wild flowers on a bank, or to a flight of birds careering across the sky. When there was nothing else to show, he showed off a little himself, and with a side-long glance took notice of the admiring look she gave to the prancing grey, who chafed the bit and speckled his mane with foam with admirable docility to his rider's desires.

At last they came in sight of the château de la Croix, an old stately residence, half fortress, and half palace. Part of it had fallen in ruins and was covered with ivy and grey lichens. The walls which surrounded it, and the gateway at the entrance were crowned with a fringe of larkspurs and gillyflowers ; and a little trickling stream edged with blue forget-me-nots, and teeming with water-cresses, flowed through the moat which encircled it. Mina had never seen anything the least like this before ; though what she had read and pictured to

herself as she read, gave her the feeling which most people have known some time or other, of recognising in a new scene the visible image of a long familiar dream. Has not the view of the Roman Campagna from the steps of St. John of Lateran or the Garden of the Villa Mattei answered, in a startling manner, to the visions which have haunted the minds of many to whom Rome is an object of artistic worship, if not of religious veneration? When the coach drove up to the bottom of the winding staircase leading to the suite of apartments inhabited by the family, Madame de la Croix and her daughter-in-law came half way down the steps to greet their visitors. Bertha and Isaure were occupied in restraining the dogs, who wished to give them an equally cordial, but more troublesome, welcome. But their bright eyes spake the words, and when they all met in the principal salon the girls embraced Mina, and then quite astonished at her height wondered if she could be only thirteen years old. She was as tall as themselves—as tall as Isaure, who was going to be married in a few weeks. They were

more like pretty fairies, these twin sisters, than grown-up women. Raoul, who was a year younger, had always taken upon himself the airs of an elder brother. Madame de la Croix was an imposing-looking person, whose regular features and serene countenance retained their beauty in old age. She was formal in manner, but very kind. There were traces of sorrow in her face, of a quiet, long-accepted, softened grief. Between her and Madame Armand de la Croix, the mother of Raoul and his sisters, there was an affection which made the old curé call them Naomi and Ruth. During eighteen years they had clung to each other as they had done on the day when the Maréchal de Villar's letter had fallen as a thunderbolt on their two hearts. 'Long live France, and long live the king,' he had written. 'The Baron Armand de la Croix has died as a hero, with the enemy's colours in his hand.' They had suffered together, and strengthened each other's purpose not to let the shadow of their grief fall on the sunshiny lives of the three young creatures playing and laughing at their feet, and the declining

years of the Baron who concentrated on these children all the love of a nature more fitted for joy than for sorrow. And so it was a happy home, in spite of one great grief shrined in the sanctuary of an undying love. And that happiness was contagious. The old-fashioned simplicity of manners, the reverential manner of the children towards the parents, the patriarchal relations between the masters and the servants, the tenants and their lord — the simple, pious customs of the peasantry, and the inexhaustible charity of the two mothers as they were fondly called in and round the castle, formed an atmosphere of peace and joy which insensibly influenced all within its sphere. It told also on Mina —

The young slight girl, the fawn-like child,  
Of green savannahs and the leafy wild,  
Yet one who knew how early tears are shed.

It brought back childhood and its sweet merriment to her over-wrought heart. It chased away what was too keen and too bitter in the memories of the last years. It soothed the grief of her late parting with her Indian brother, and substituted other

thoughts for her long, solitary musings on the mystery which she dimly discerned in the lives of her parents. But at first there was a little formality in her intercourse with the young de la Croix's. Isaure and Bertha, and even Raoul, were more reserved than the young people she had lately known in Paris. Dinner was served soon after the arrival of the strangers, and Raoul supplied every possible and impossible want of hers with watchful assiduity; but though on the most affectionate footing with their parents, the old-fashioned etiquette was preserved in this family, and the son and daughters maintained an almost unbroken silence whilst their elders conversed. But after dinner they went out, and then their tongues were loosened. The three girls walked up and down the terrace, and Mina asked a thousand questions about the old castle; its thick grey walls, its turrets, and its battlements filled her with astonishment. She could not believe, she said, that men had made it. Bertha laughed, and said, 'Men were giants in those days' — a fact scarcely borne out by history, but which she had drawn from a

volume of old romances, the only book besides her *livre d'heures* she had much read.

Isaure pointed out to Mina the dungeons of the old fortress. ‘There is a secret chamber beneath the tower,’ she said, ‘where Elise de Sabran was murdered by her lover. Her ghost is sometimes seen on the turret stairs, and it is also said that Roger le Jaune, one of our ancestors, died of hunger in the vaults on the east side because he would not betray the king’s secret.’

‘I should like to see *his* ghost,’ said Mina, earnestly. ‘He must have been a brave man.’

‘Oh, what a strange idea!’ cried Bertha, ‘to want to see a ghost. I should not like a visit from the other world; not even from a saint, I think.’

‘Perhaps,’ said Isaure, ‘Mademoiselle hopes the ghost of Baron Roger would tell her the king’s secret. But you would have to ask him. Ghosts never speak first, they say.’

‘Who are *they* who know so much of ghosts, fair Isaure?’ cried a voice behind the speaker. This was Raoul, who had

watched for an opportunity to join the trio. There was something catching in his laugh ; both his sisters and Mina joined in it, though Isaure scolded him for startling her. A bird flew across the terrace, and Mina exclaimed,

‘ Oh, should you not like to be that bird ? ’

‘ Why, why, mademoiselle ? ’ Raoul asked.

‘ Because he is flying over the walls.’

‘ And are you longing to go beyond them, Mademoiselle Mina ? ’

‘ Oh, yes. The country looks so pretty.’

‘ Then I will go and ask the three mothers —you know we have two of our own—if, under my escort and protection, the young ladies may issue forth from the castle walls and visit the environs.’

He went on his errand, and Isaure said to Mina,

‘ Did you notice my brother’s horse this morning ? It is reckoned the handsomest grey in the whole province.’

‘ Oh, yes ; he has such a beautiful arched neck, and looks so spirited and so proud.’

‘ And do you not think Raoul rides very well ? ’ asked Bertha, in her turn.

‘ Yes, very well indeed. He and his horse

seem to make one, like the statues of Centaurs in the galleries at Paris.'

'I think,' said Bertha, 'Raoul never looks so handsome as on horseback.'

'He is the best brother that ever lived,' said Isaure.

'If he is ever so good, he cannot be better than mine,' Mina answered.

'I did not know you had one. Raoul said you were an only child.'

'I have an adopted brother, an Indian.'

'Oh, what a funny thing!' exclaimed Bertha, bursting out laughing, 'to have a savage for a brother.'

'He is not a savage,' said Mina, reddening.  
'He is as good as any white man can be.'

'But not so handsome as Raoul?'

'I don't know about that. Ontara has beautiful eyes, and a dark, clear, brown complexion.'

'Oh, how frightful, dear Mina! I would not for all the world exchange brothers with you.'

'Nor I with you,' Mina answered, with warmth.

'No, of course not,' said Bertha, laughing,

‘because, if Raoul was your brother, he could not be your ——’

She stopped short and coloured.

‘My what?’ Mina asked, with a puzzled look.

‘Oh, nothing, nothing. It was old Nanette put it into my head. Never mind, Isaure,’ she said, kissing her sister, ‘don’t look so grave; I have not said anything. How old are you, Mademoiselle Mina?’

‘Thirteen; but please do not call me Mademoiselle. Nobody does. You know I am not French. I am an Indian girl.’

‘I know, a creole. Brother,’ she said to Raoul, who had returned with the desired permission, and was leading the way towards the castle gate, ‘what do you guess Mina’s age to be?’

‘I cannot guess, sister, because I know,’ he replied, and then they all went out through the entrance-court, and conducted their guest all over the curious and picturesque ins and outs of the old fortress, which had been by degrees turned into a family residence. They visited the quaint parterres, gay with every variety of sweet-smelling and bright-coloured

flowers ; the bees and the doves, Isaure's pets ; and Bertha's chickens ; and Raoul took them to the kennel and into the stables, and showed Mina the dun pony which, if she liked, she might ride the next day, a thing she had not done since her father used to carry her with him on his own horse at St. Agathe. The walk was a pleasant one, and Mina's spirits rose apace in the society of her new friends. Their liveliness ; their gay, joyous laughter, the exuberance of their youthful spirits, was unlike anything she had yet known. It acted upon her like refreshing air or sparkling wine on an exhausted frame. Raoul was the gayest of them all. His jokes, his stories, his nonsense, the good-humoured mischievousness which played about his handsome face, the innocent malice of his dark eyes, the droll questions he put to her, his funny views of people and things amused and charmed her. There had been in her life so little of that kind of merriment. Wit, and vivacity, and keen encounters of the tongue, she had witnessed in the salon of the Hotel d'Orgeville, but none of the bubbling natural overflow of gladness which takes its

source in innocent and happy hearts, which have never been in contact with the cares, the miseries, or the vices of the world. When they went through the village, the women and children were sitting out of doors, enjoying the rest of the evening hour, and smiled and curtseyed as the young seigneur and his sisters went by. The peasants, returning from work, pulled off their hats and said ‘Good night’ in the patois of the country. From many a poor person’s lips she heard a blessing invoked upon her companions, and good wishes for the young Isaure, who was soon to go forth as a bride from her ancestral home. One old woman, leaning on her staff, said to her gossip, who was watching the young people down the streets,

‘Methinks the choir children may as well be practising a welcome as a farewell to a bride.’

‘Ah ! bah ! Our young lord is too young to marry. He is going on his travels first.’

‘Well, I saw him gathering Madeleine’s roses for that blue-eyed young lady who arrived a few hours ago at the castle ; and, if

monsieur le chevalier is not paying his court to her, I am much mistaken. Madeleine is in the third heaven ; she will get something handsome for her flowers. Look, they are going into the church. He is showing her all about the place. We shall see them, I hope, on the green next Sunday evening. M. le Baron likes to see the boys and girls at play after vespers.'

‘Aye, and Mademoiselle Isaure is to give a marriage portion to the best-behaved girl of the village. A little bird has whispered to me that your Jane’s eldest daughter is to be the *Rosière*.’

The old woman wagged her head, and laughed at her gossip’s shrewd guess. The supper bell was ringing when the young people returned to the castle. It was served in a hall, where, at a long table, sat all the baron’s household, as well as his family ; grey-headed serving men and women, with babies on their knees ; and boys and girls with bright sunny faces, looking both good and happy. Mina sat between Bertha and Isaure, and Raoul on the opposite side. He seldom took his eyes off her ; and

when the meal was over he went with her and his sisters to the parapet which formed a sort of terrace overhanging the moat. There they sat on the stone bench, and made Mina describe the new world where she had lived so long—and Bertha and Raoul listened with flushed cheeks and eager eyes, and Isaure cried at the tales she told them of the revolt and the destruction of the Natches. And they all wished they could see Ontara, and would have liked to live at St. Agathe if France had not been their native land and the most beautiful country in the world. Mina fired up a little at this, and then Raoul, to appease her, said that he had certainly never seen North America, but that he would like very much to go there one day. And then she would not be outdone in civility, and admitted that, although she hated Paris, the country in France, and particularly the Forez, was very charming. Then Isaure said she must visit the old Abbey of Ste. Odile, and the Roche qui pleure, and the Shrine of our Lady of the Wood. And Bertha said she liked the Roche qui vire better than the Roche qui pleure; and a dance on the village

green better than anything else in the world, except a ball at Montbrison, the only one she had ever been to. And then she and Raoul laughed with Isaure about that ball, and explained to Mina what the joke was. And then he asked her if she would dance with him a minuet. And she said she did not know how, and he offered to teach her. And she said she was too stupid to learn—that Mademoiselle d'Orgeville's dancing-master had said so. And Raoul made a disrespectful speech about the dancing-master, and Mina laughed, and the sound of that laugh was like music in her mother's ears as she sat working at the open window by the side of Madame de la Croix, and Madame Armand played on the spinnet over and over again the baron's favourite tunes, whilst he dozed in his great arm-chair. The stars had risen one by one in the darkening sky and the great clock of the castle struck nine. Then the laughter was hushed, and the spinnet shut up, and after night prayers had been said, every soul in the house withdrew to rest.

Mina sat a while on her mother's lap, great

tall girl as she was, and rested her head on her shoulder, before the shutters were closed in their bed chamber. The perfume of the jessamine which covered the mullioned windows was filling it with fragrance. The moon was shining on the red-brick floor, and throwing changeful lights on the tapestried walls.

‘Don’t you think this a very nice charming place, mamma? and our friends, don’t you like them very much?’

‘Ah!’ said her mother, stroking her cheek, ‘my Mina has found out at last, has she, that white people can be pleasant?’

‘Yes, they are very pleasant, and so kind to me. Isaure told me a beautiful story about the fair-haired Ermengarde and her daughter, who was called, like her, Isaure—and then M. Raoul said there was another Isaure, who wrote verses, and was crowned at Toulouse some hundred years ago. He laughed about ladies writing verses. I did not tell him, and have never told anybody but you, mamma, that I write verses sometimes.’

‘But as you will never sing them before

great crowds, or be crowned like Clémence Isaure,' answered her mother, laughing, 'there is no harm in it.'

'No, but I had rather M. Raoul did not know.'

'Don't be afraid ; I will not tell him.'

'Mamma, to-morrow I am to ride the dun pony, and to see so many interesting things. I hope it will be fine. And in the afternoon we are to fish in that pretty little stream that runs through the moat. Have you been to the church, mother ? Oh, it is such a beautiful, grand old church, with banners in it and shields, and the tomb of a crusader, of a Baron de la Croix, who went to the Holy Land with Godfrey de Bouillon. M. Raoul says he took leave of his wife at the church door after they had said a prayer together before the altar. Mamma, when he said that, he asked me if I would kneel down by his side, at the same place, and say a prayer that what he wished might happen. I asked if it was a good thing he wished, and he said, Yes. So I did what he asked. When we left the church he said—"Papa and mamma were married at that altar. I have never seen my

father—he died before I was born.” That was the only time he spoke gravely, for he does nothing but laugh, and say such funny things that he makes me laugh too. Will you look at the crusader’s tomb to-morrow? and please call me early, dearest mamma, for we are to ride before it gets hot, Bertha says, and whilst the dew is on the grass.’

Madame d’Auban tenderly pressed her lips on her daughter’s cheek. Mina went to bed, and was soon fast asleep. But Madame d’Auban lay awake, thinking of German castles and haunted chambers and of palaces, enclosing, even as in living graves, warm and loving hearts. And she mused on her child’s destiny—her lovely, gifted child, doomed to share her parent’s strange and unsettled existence. It was long before she closed her eyes. But in the morning she was sleeping heavily, when Mina bounded down the steps leading to one of the entrances of the parish church, which stood between the court of the castle and the village.

The ride proved a delightful one to the new friends. The dun pony had carried Bertha and Isaure for many years. It was

as gentle a palfry as lady ever rode. Raoul, mounted on his fiery grey, headed the cavalcade, which went winding down the hill, and across the fields into the woods. He was in the highest spirits, in spite of the baron having insisted on an old *piqueur* escorting the party, in case of accidents—a precaution which he had deemed a reflection on his own prudence. But his good-humoured resentment, and his outbreaks of indignation at Jacque Ferrand's remonstrances on one or two occasions, when the roads were getting bad, and M. le Chevalier was pushing on too fast for the ladies and the horses—‘only too fast for M. Jacque's own comfort,’ as Raoul whispered to Mina—only heightened the excitement and enjoyment which at that age derives its source from the overflowing joyousness of youthful hearts. They rode through shady nooks, soft green valleys, and smiling villages. They drew up at the top of a hill, to look at the view of Montbrison and of Moulins in the distance—the spire of its cathedral rising against the deep blue sky. They dismounted to explore the ruins of the abbey in the wood, and said a Hail

Mary at the shrine, which was a favourite place of pilgrimage throughout the neighbourhood. They drank of the water of la Roche qui pleure, and breakfasted on milk and bread and strawberries from a neighbouring farm. The sun was getting high up in the horizon as they returned, skirting the wood just within the shade, alongside fields of waving corn, just ripening for the sickle, and edged by the fringe of scarlet, blue, and purple flowers which modern improvements are gradually banishing from the land.

Mina noticed the healthy, happy looks of the French peasantry, so different from the aspect of the Indians and the slaves of the western hemispheres. Raoul asked her, as they were drawing near home, if she would not like always to live in France. ‘No,’ she said, ‘not always;’ and then looked a little thoughtful, and would not say where she wished to live. There was now, even as there always had been, a singular mixture in Mina of what was not so much childish as childlike; and of thoughts and feelings matured beyond her age. When, in the afternoon, she sat by the trout stream, speaking

under her breath, for fear of frightening away the fishes, and laughing, till she almost cried, at Bertha's losing her temper with them, she seemed, except for her height, perhaps, even younger than she was ; but if any one could have read the thoughts which Raoul's question had awakened, or known what subjects were often occupying her mind, it would have been a matter of astonishment that one so young should be so deep a thinker, or capable, in an emergency, of a woman's patience and energy. Days of brilliant sunshine, of country air, and of intercourse with her new friends, wonderfully improved her health. Her mother watched with delight the elasticity of her step and the brightness of her countenance. Everybody in the castle was delighted with the little creole ; and as to the chevalier, if he had fallen in love with her at first sight, every hour seemed to add to the intensity of his boyish passion. Finding out that she was fond of books, he proposed one wet morning to his sisters to take their work into the library. Isaure gladly consented. Roger's speech about Clémence

Isaure had awakened a literary enthusiasm which had not yet subsided.

The library contained as many cases of stuffed birds and collections of insects as books; but there was a curious set of old romances of the days of the troubadours and the gay 'savoir', and some volumes of tales of chivalry, which Raoul had read over and over again during his boyhood. He proposed to amuse the ladies, whilst they worked, with the history of *Amadis de Gaule*, and Mina listened with the deepest attention to the knight-errant's adventures. Raoul was satisfied with her attention, but not with her admiration.

'Mademoiselle Mina, would you not have liked to live in those days?' he asked.

'But I don't think there ever were such days,' she answered. This was a view of the subject he was not prepared to admit.

'You don't think there were knights-errant and tournaments, and ladies in whose honour the knights broke lances and performed prodigies of valour?'

'Oh, yes, but not enchanters and giants, such as Prince *Amadis* met with.'

‘Then you don’t like this story, Mademoiselle Mina?’

‘Not so much as real ones, like that of Joan of Arc, for instance.’

‘Ah! that is one of the few amusing bits of history. Battles are always good fun. I got a prize for writing verses on the battle of Fontenoy. But real, downright histories are very stupid. Do not you hate everything about laws, commerce, art, and agriculture?’

‘Yes, in a great history book,’ answered Mina, laughing; ‘but I like pictures and cornfields, and I should like a law that would prevent people from buying and selling other men. I like people who do some good.’

‘The knights-errant used to defend the helpless, and punish their oppressors.’

‘Then I should like them.’

‘And you would like Raoul,’ whispered Bertha in Mina’s ear; ‘he is so good to the poor and to little children, even though he laughs if anybody says so, or takes notice of it.’

‘No secrets, Mdlle. Bertha,’ cried her brother. ‘In mamma’s book on Politeness, which

I had to read a chapter of, as a penance, when I had transgressed any of its rules, it is said that whispering in company is forbidden.'

'I was telling Mina bad things of you.'

'Mademoiselle, slandering is a great sin; I hope M. le Curé will not give you absolution for a twelvemonth.'

'That is very possible, brother, for I am not at all disposed to retract what I have said.'

The sittings in the library led to more talking than reading. The hours went by very fast, and the days also. Poor Raoul began to dread M. d'Auban's arrival as the greatest misfortune, for he knew it would be speedily followed by the departure of the *Dame de ses pensées*. All sorts of schemes were in his mind, and he had long conversations with his mother; and his spirits rose very much (not that they had at any time much fallen) after an interview he had had with the baron on the fourth day of Mdlle. d'Auban's visit.

The evening of that day proved very wet. The morning, according to Wordsworth's lines, 'had gone forth deceitfully, clad in

radiant vest ; but dark clouds, and the distant rolling of thunder, and a first few heavy drops, had driven the young people home some time before the accustomed hour. After supper there was rain, with thunder and lightning. The ladies drew round a table in the centre of the room, and worked.

‘ This is just an evening for ghost stories,’ said Bertha, who was always the first to propose this kind of amusement, though as she hastened to declare it made her blood run cold, and her hair stand on end, when her grandpapa told of the man at Moulins who had spent a night in the churchyard, and had seen three different spectres, the one more awful than the other. This sort of conversation, when once set going, is easily carried on. There were long-standing stories of apparitions which the baron related with great effect, and Madame de la Croix had known a lady who had seen a ghost with her own eyes. And Raoul had heard at college a strange tale of three men travelling in a diligence, who were joined by three others, that looked like their own spectres, and did everything that they did, except that they never eat at

the inns ; but they always slipped into their beds before they could get in themselves, only when one of the travellers had the courage to lie down as if there was nobody beside him, he found the ghost did not take up any room, and he slept very comfortably. But the next day the three spectres were in the coach again, and . . . .

‘ Good heavens how pale you look, my dear, you are as white as a sheet,’ exclaimed Madame Armand, who was sitting opposite to Mina.

‘ Hush, Raoul, she is frightened with these dreadful stories.’

All eyes were turned on Mina. Her face was quite colourless, and she seemed ready to faint.

‘ It is nothing, only such an odd fancy, mamma,’ she said to Madame d’Auban, who had taken her hand and found it cold and trembling.

‘ You used not to be frightened at these sort of tales when you were a very little girl, Mina, darling, but I suppose——’

‘ It was not the stories, mamma, only such an odd fancy.’

‘Did you think you saw anything?’ said her young friends, eagerly.

‘You’d better not talk to her about it,’ said Madame d’Auban, who saw she was turning pale again.

‘Come,’ said Madame Armand, ‘I will play a rondo, and you shall dance and drive the ghosts away.’

She did so, and Mina joined hands with the rest, and the colour returned to her cheeks, and she sang the Ritournelle with the others; but her mother observed that now and then she glanced timidly towards the windows.

‘For my part,’ said Madame de la Croix, in reply to some observation of her husband’s, ‘I am not half as much afraid of ghosts as of robbers. I had much rather hear of a spectre in the neighbourhood, than of Mandrin and his band.’

‘My dear,’ said the baron, ‘you need not entertain the slightest apprehension on that subject. Since I have been appointed Provost of the Forez, I have taken effectual measures on the subject, and have twice reviewed the rural force. You need not pretend to be an

*esprit fort.* I am sure you would die of terror at the sight of a ghost.'

'How gracefully Mina dances,' said Madame Armand to Madame d'Auban. 'She is as light as a fairy. Oh, now, she and Raoul are going to practice the *Menuet de la Cour*, dear madame. Well, I think you and I may, without foolish vanity, just between ourselves, agree that prettier partners were never seen than my black-eyed chevalier and your blue-eyed daughter.'

They did look to great advantage during that dancing lesson. Mina was taking pains to learn the graceful steps of the minuet, and smiled so prettily as half-way across the room she stopped to curtsey to her partner, that Raoul forgot to make his own obeisance, and clapped his hands. She stopped short, and laughing, exclaimed, 'that is not fair.' Then both his sisters scolded him, and Madame Armand played the rondo again, and they danced till they were tired.

'Are you sure, my child, that you are not ill?' Madame d'Auban asked her daughter when she and herself had withdrawn to their bedchamber.

‘I am quite well, dearest mamma.’

‘Then were you frightened with the ghost stories?’

‘No; I did not mind them.’

‘But then, Mina, love, I want to know what made you turn so pale in the middle of Raoul’s ridiculous story.’

‘Mamma, it is better not to speak of foolish fancies. I am sure it was all imagination.’

‘I don’t think it is the best way to get rid of a fear or a fancy to keep it to oneself. We can often drive away troublesome thoughts by telling them.’

‘Mamma, I assure you I don’t believe in ghosts and apparitions. But I suppose people see things sometimes, and that it is all a mistake.’

Madame d’Auban felt uneasy. She had a lurking belief in apparitions.

‘For heaven’s sake, Mina, what did you see?’

‘Well, mamma, I was looking straight at the windows of the parlour—the one which opens on to the parapet—when there came a flash of lightning, and I saw, as distinctly as possible it seemed to me, a face looking into the

room, and it was at the moment at least, I felt sure it was Osseo's face.'

'The Indian Osseo,' repeated her mother, apparently relieved. 'O, my darling, I have no doubt then, it was an ocular delusion. I have often felt as if I saw about my bed some of these terrible dark Natches' faces. They quite haunted me at one time.'

'I had never thought so little about America as since we have been staying here. I was listening to M. Raoul, and wondering about his travellers and their ghosts. Then all at once I saw what I thought was Osseo's face; but it is such a brief glimpse of anything a flash of lightning gives.'

'You did not hear anything about that Osseo before leaving Paris?'

'No, mamma, Ontara did not know where he was. He ran away, you remember, the day they landed at Marseilles.'

'Your mind has dwelt so much upon Indians, my Mina, that it is not wonderful you should see them in imagination.'

'Yes, I suppose it was a mistake,' Mina repeated, and nothing more passed between her mother and herself on that subject.

The next morning, when the family were assembled at breakfast, the baron announced with exultation that he had received excellent news of the success of the rural gendarmerie, in an encounter with a troupe of Mandrin's gang in the Forest of Ludres. Several of them had been taken prisoners, and safely lodged in the prison at Moulins. Mandrin himself had narrowly escaped being arrested. It was supposed he must be concealed in some cave or pit in the same neighbourhood.

‘Have they caught, sir,’ Raoul asked, ‘that incarnate devil, they call Lohie?’

Mina and her mother started, and exchanged glances.

‘Is he an Indian?’ the latter enquired.

‘By that *nom de guerre*, I should think so,’ answered the baron; ‘for I suppose it is a *nom de guerre*, it sounds like it. A man of colour he certainly is, unless he paints his face to keep up a sort of *prestige*. He is next to Mandrin himself, the most desperate of the gang. They call him his lieutenant.’

‘Choiset tells me—he is our gamekeeper, ladies,’ Raoul said; ‘that his eyes glare like a

tiger-cat's. He knows a man who saw him some weeks ago, and who he says relates wonderful things of him. He is supposed to bear a charmed life, to carry about him some mysterious talisman. He has taken the lead of late in all Mandrin's most desperate exploits, and always escapes the gendarmes' clutches. They are convinced he is a devil. Aye, and if they catch him,' said the baron, 'he runs a good chance of being hung like a dog to a tree, without trial or shrift.'

'I wonder,' said Madame d'Auban, hesitatingly, 'if he can be the Natches we once knew, our friend Ontara's companion till they landed in France. His name was Osseo, but he may have been called Lohie by his comrades. Mina, my child, we must tell M. de la Croix that you think you saw him last night.'

Mina turned crimson. A half-childish sense of fidelity, and compassion towards a persecuted people, made her loth to say a word which might lead to Osseo's apprehension. He was Ontara's relative, an exile, doomed to slavery, and ignorant of right and wrong. She felt more pity than

horror of him, robber as he was. ‘Mamma,’ she said, in a low voice, and looking reproachfully at her mother, ‘we thought last night it was a mistake.’

‘Yes, love, but we did not know what we do now.’

The baron eagerly asked for an explanation, and Madame d’Auban, seeing that her daughter did not utter, felt herself of course obliged to tell him exactly what she had heard from Mina on the previous evening. The ladies of the château turned pale, and the baron and his grandson went to give orders to set a watch round the castle, and search the ruins which might afford a hiding-place to the robbers. Now that he was on his guard, he prepared to give them a warm reception, and forbade anything being said which would raise an alarm in the neighbourhood, and prevent their attempting an attack. He was strongly inclined to believe that Mina had really seen Lohie, and that the Indian had been sent to reconnoitre the approaches of the castle.

The young people went out as usual, but Mina was silent and depressed. Raoul’s

gaiety jarred upon her. Her thoughts were fixed upon the vision of the day before. She wondered if the Indian still carried about the serpent in his bosom. The words the baron had said rung in her ears; 'Hung like a dog.' They made her shudder. She could not understand that her young companions did not feel these sort of things more. They did not understand her anxiety. 'If Lohie is Osseo,' Raoul said, 'he deserves to be broken on the wheel; for he tried to make you his slave, the vile wretch. I should like to shoot him down like a wild beast.'

'How can you say that?' said Mina, indignantly, 'What would become of his soul?'

Raoul was a little puzzled. He said his prayers regularly, and meant to be good and save his own soul, but had not given much thought to those of other people, especially those of heathens and robbers. So he evaded the question, and did not revert to the subject.

As they were returning to the castle the baron met them, and took Mina into the hall.

He asked her to point out the exact spot where she had seen that limb of Satan, Lohie. She showed him the window at which she had caught sight of his face. Then inspired with a sudden courage, she said :

‘ M. le Baron, will you tell the gendarmes not to kill Osseo till I have spoken to him?’

‘ You would not wish, my dear, to speak to a robber?’

‘ Oh, but I would, M. le Baron, indeed, indeed I would.’

‘ He is an outlaw, like the rest of the gang, and our men may destroy them like vermin. But I have given orders that if this Lohie or Osseo is caught he should be brought here alive, as he may give information as to the others. By the bye, Raoul tells me you speak the language of these savages, Mademoiselle Mina. As you are so courageous, we shall get you to examine him.’

‘ Shall you put him into the dungeon?’ she asked.

‘ Take care, grandpapa,’ Bertha cried ; ‘ Mina will let him out.’

The baron looked grave.

‘ This man is a murderer and a robber.

Mademoiselle Mina has been too well brought up, I am sure, to pity such a wretch.

Poor Mina! she did not answer, but she longed to say that it was because this man was a murderer and a robber, and an unbelieving, unbaptized heathen, that the thought of his sudden death wrung her heart.

The day went by somewhat wearily; and, as the night approached, some of the inmates of the castle felt restless and anxious. The ladies and the servants had related to one another stories of robbers and assassins till they had grown so nervous that a foot-fall on the stairs or the rustling of leaves near the window made them start and shudder.

The baron desired that every one should go to bed as usual, except the sentries to whom he had assigned their several posts. Madame d'Auban and her daughter withdrew to their room, and both fell asleep soon after going to bed. But Mina woke in about an hour, her nerves on the full stretch, and her heart beating like a pendulum. For two hours not a sound disturbed the tranquillity of the night. Then a sort of faintness, the

result of intense watching, came over her. She slipped out of bed, put on her dressing gown and shoes, and a mantle, with a hood over her head. The door of the bedroom opened on an outward winding staircase leading to the parapet. She opened it gently, and stood on the steps breathing the fresh air. There was no moon, but the night was not very dark: a few stars were visible, when the clouds divided in the sombre sky. She stood there for a few minutes, and was about to re-enter the room, when she saw a figure ascending the steps perfectly noiselessly. She did not move or scream, but said in a low whisper, ‘Osseo! ’

The figure stopped, and she heard it answer in the Indian language—

‘Who are you that know Osseo?’

She stepped forward and said :

‘I am Mina. In the city of the Natches you once called me your sister. Go away; the white men are watching for you, and will kill you. Throw away the serpent, Osseo: leave the wicked tribe.’

‘I have shed the blood of the white men,’ answered the Indian, in a low but distinct

whisper: ‘the serpent delivers them into my hand. But the sound of thy voice is like water to the parched lip. O, daughter of the French tribe, come with me into the woods, and I will shed no more blood: I will lie down on the grass and listen to thy words.’

‘Osseo, in the name of the Great Spirit of the Christian’s prayer, go away before my people kill thee. If I call out they will come.’

‘Maiden, the tribe that kills and steals is at hand, and if I whistle they will scale the wall and put thy people to death. But come with me, little bird of the west: I will hide thee from them before I give the signal.’

‘They cannot come, Osseo; they cannot come. There are armed men upon the walls. At the least noise they will rush upon thee.’

‘My fetish is stronger than they are,’ whispered the Indian, and Mina saw him feeling in his bosom for the serpent. She shuddered, and stood transfixed to the spot, as if fascinated herself, and unable to raise her voice. There was a minute’s silence. Then a flash and the report of a gun. The

Indian had seized hold of the serpent more roughly than usual. The creature hissed, and sprang to his throat. He gave a violent start, and his gun, which he held with one arm against his shoulder, slipped, went off, and wounded him in the breast. The noise roused at once all the sentinels, and the baron and Raoul were in an instant on the spot. Torches threw light on the scene, and Mina was found kneeling by the Indian's side, who lay apparently dead. The serpent on his bosom was lifeless also. But when they took up Osseo, to carry him into the hall, it was perceived that he still breathed, and Mina implored the baron to send for a priest. Raoul went to fetch the curé, and her mother tried to take her away; but she turned round with an imploring countenance, and said :

‘ Let me stay, mother, in case he revives.’

And the priest, who arrived at that moment, seconded her entreaties. Raoul had told him who the dying man was, and how anxious Mina was about his soul. Nobody quite understood what had happened. She looked for the baron, and said :

‘He told me before the gun went off that the robbers were close at hand.’

‘Aye,’ said he, ‘we must be on our guard, then ; but the sound of the gun will have frightened them away, I think. But how, in heaven’s name, my child, were you speaking with this wretch ?’

‘I was standing at the door of our room, to get air, for I was faint, and I saw him gliding up the stairs. I called to him, and told him who I was, and begged him to go away—’

‘The deuce you did !’ ejaculated the Baron.

‘But he would not go ; and as he was feeling for his fetish—that serpent you see there—his gun went off.’

‘Hush !’ said the curé ; ‘I think he is moaning.’

The Indian had opened his eyes and looked at the bystanders with a half-fierce, half-bewildered gaze, but when he saw Mina a more human expression stole over his features. He raised his hand to his mouth. This was a token he recognised her. The village doctor, who had been summoned, felt his

pulse, and said he had not long to live. The young girl bent over him, and in accents low and sweet, spoke to him in his own tongue. The hall was by this time crowded, and every one was watching the dying man and the child, and the priest standing close to her. A pin might have been heard to drop. No one uttered a word but herself, and no one understood what she was saying except the dying man, whose eyes fastened themselves intently on her face. She looked inspired. On the ashy paleness of her cheek a red spot deepened into crimson as her emotion increased. Sometimes she raised her hand and pointed to the sky. Once he felt in his breast, as if searching for something there. She took up the dead serpent and showed it to him, then throwing it down she set her foot upon it, and held the crucifix before his eyes. Raoul de la Croix felt at that moment a thrilling sensation in his heart which he never forgot. He would fain have fallen at her feet; and her own mother gazed with awe on her child. At last the Indian spoke. His strength seemed for a moment to rally. He raised himself on his elbow, took the

crucifix in his hand, and touched his forehead with it. Then in her ear he murmured a few words.

‘Monsieur le Curé,’ Mina cried, ‘he asks to be baptised. He believes now in the Great Spirit who died for him. He is very sorry to have robbed and killed His children. Oh, M. le Curé, will you baptise him?’

Whilst she was speaking, a spasm passed over Osseo’s face, and the death-rattle sounded in his throat. There was no time to lose. The priest baptised him, and whilst the water was still flowing on his brow, the poor ignorant savage, on whom a ray of light had shone in the last hour of his life, died with his eyes fixed on the crucifix which Mina was holding in her clasped and upraised hands.

Those who had witnessed this scene had been deeply impressed. Mina herself did not seem at all conscious that she had been admired, or even much noticed, on account of the part she had taken in it. An immense weight was off her mind, and during the days which followed, she was often in high spirits. The friendship between her

and the young de la Croix grew more and more close. The baron, delighted at the result of Mandrin's projected attack, and at the disappearance of his gang from the Forez, which followed upon his lieutenant's death, could afford to forgive Mina, and to laugh at her for her connivance, as he called it, with the robbers. Madame d'Auban, meantime, was counting the hours till her husband's arrival. He had written to say that he would leave Paris in two days. No positive promise had been given him about an appointment in Bourbon, and recent circumstances had made him averse to press the matter. He had accordingly contented himself with obtaining letters of introduction to the governor and one or two other French residents in the island. He added, that he had sent Antoine to their former lodgings in the Rue de l'Ecu, and that he had ascertained that the Comte de Saxe had called there, and expressed great surprise at their departure. The landlord had told him they had left France as well as Paris, and were on their way to the Isle de Bourbon.

When Raoul heard that M. d'Auban was

expected in a day or two, he looked more thoughtful than he had ever done in his life before. He could scarcely sit still a moment, and on the morning when he was expected, he rode to Montbrison to meet him.

As he walked up and down under the plane trees of the promenade, it seemed to him as if years instead of days had elapsed since the one on which he had handed out of the diligence Madame d'Auban and Mina. When the same cumbrous vehicle drove to the inn door, his heart beat fast, and before Colonel d'Auban had fairly set foot on the ground, he found himself clasped in the chevalier's arms.

‘Ah! my young friend,’ he exclaimed, ‘I need not ask who you are. The warmth of your welcome would make me know it, even if you were not so like what your father was at your age, when we were at college together.’

‘Monsieur, he must have been younger than than I am now,’ said Raoul, who did not like to be considered as a collegian.

‘Ah! but I knew him, too, after we had left Vannes, when he was about to be married.’

‘He married very young indeed,’ cried Raoul, eagerly, ‘when he was about eighteen.’

D’Auban then inquired after the health of all the members of the baron’s family, and spoke of their kindness to his wife and daughter.

‘Mademoiselle Mina is an angel!’ Raoul said, with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes.

D’Auban smiled, and then they both mounted their horses and rode out of the town.

D’Auban was delighted with his young companion. There was something so ingenuous, so frank, and so noble about him, and then he was so evidently in love with his little Mina. He related the story of Osseo’s death with such an ardent enthusiasm about her goodness and her courage, and described how beautiful she looked by the side of the dying Indian, that the father’s heart was touched, and tears stood in his eyes.

‘If only,’ he murmured to himself, ‘if only the spirit does not wear out the frame!’ and then turning playfully to his companion, he said aloud, ‘I had rather, M.

Raoul, she had been playing at dominoes than playing the heroine. She has had enough of that sort of thing for a child like her.'

'Ah! she is not a child, M. le Colonel.'

'I fear not. Would she was, my young friend! She has known too early what it is to suffer.'

'Is she looking well?' d'Auban anxiously asked, for he did not like to think of the scene she had gone through.

'Oh! yes. She has the most lovely colour in her cheeks, like that of a deep red rose, and such a brilliant light in her eyes!'

The boy's enthusiastic description made the father sigh. But when Mina ran out into the court of the castle to meet him, he was satisfied. She was looking stronger than in Paris, and seemed very happy. After receiving the most affectionate greetings from all the family, and seen the young people go off on a fishing excursion, Mina on the dun pony, and Bertha on a grey one, and Raoul walking alongside of them, their merry voices still ringing in his ears, he drew his wife's arm in his own, and they went into the parterre to take a quiet

stroll, and talk over the incidents of the preceding days. If ever there was an instance of the romance of wedded love in advancing life, and amidst the many changes it had brought with it, this was one. These two beings loved each other with the most intense of all affections—that of married lovers. The dangers they had gone through, if they had not added to the intensity of that affection, had preserved in it all the freshness of its romantic beginnings.

‘This is happiness,’ she exclaimed, as they hurried into the garden, and sitting down on a bench which overlooked the valley, rested her head against her husband’s shoulder, with a sense of blissful repose. He smiled, and fondly gazed on the pale fair face so passionately loved.

‘And you do not mind, sweetheart,’ he said, ‘that we are poorer than ever, and that when we get to Bourbon we may have to live in a small cottage, and in a very different manner than at St. Agathe?’

‘Perhaps,’ she said, with a little *malice*, ‘you are going to ask me, M. d’Auban, if I have no regrets for the King of France’s

magnificent offer, or for the suite of apartments I was to have occupied at the palace of Fontainebleau.'

He laughed, and said, 'It must be owned, madame, that you have treated his majesty somewhat unceremoniously.'

'You know I had no direct message from the king. But, Henri, you have heard of Mina's heroic conduct about the poor Indian robber. I assure you that when she stood that night, with her little foot on the dead serpent, and the cross in her hand, it was like a heavenly vision. She rises before me over and over again in that attitude, and with the peculiar look in her eyes we have sometimes noticed. But I have something to communicate to you. What will you think of it? Madame Armand de la Croix has been speaking to me about our child. It seemed to me very strange. Our own destiny has been so extraordinary, and Mina is so young really, though she looks grown up, that a regular proposal of marriage for her took me by surprise.'

D'Auban started, and looked amazed.

'A proposal of marriage for Mina?'

‘Yes; the Baron is about to ask you for her hand for his grandson.’

‘If I did not hear it from you, love, I should deem it impossible. Raoul is the baron’s heir, would he wed him with a portionless girl?’

‘Madame Armand has owned to me, that a heavy debt of gratitude is due from their family to yours; that your grandfather and your father never would accept payment of the large sum which at the time of the League the former gave as a ransom for the life of the Baron Charles de la Croix; but that the debt is not cancelled in their hearts or in their memories. From the moment the baron heard you had a daughter, he determined, in his own mind, that the Chevalier Raoul should marry her, and since they have known Mina he is more bent upon it than ever.’

‘And what do *you* say to it, madame? Is the chevalier a good match enough for your daughter? I have always resolved to leave the decision of her fate in your hands.’

His wife smiled and answered, ‘I ask only one thing for my child, that she should

be free to accept or to reject the offer made for her hand. The twofold experience of my life has taught me beyond measure to value freedom on that point ; I would not for the world have her controlled.'

'She is too young to marry, and so is he.'

'Ah, but what the baron proposes is that they should be affianced at once, and then that the chevalier should travel for three years—at the end of that time, wherever we are, he will come and claim his bride.'

'I see, my sweetest wife, that the thought of this marriage pleases you.'

'I do not deny it. If I could have pictured to myself a fate I should have chosen for Mina, it would have been to enter a family of noble but yet not of princely birth, one in which I have witnessed the most admirable virtues and the purest domestic happiness. Young Raoul is handsome, good, and I need not apologise to you, Henri, for adding, though others might laugh at me—he is in love with her.'

'And does the little *Dame de ses pensées* return his passion ?' asked d'Auban, smiling.

'Ah ! I don't know. That child of ours

is often a great enigma to me. Open and guileless as she is, I am sometimes at a loss when I try to fathom the depths of her young heart.'

'Do not be too romantic, sweet wife. Far be it from me to force her inclinations, but at her age assent is sufficient.'

'You know no French young lady ever utters a stronger form of approval of the suitor presented to her acceptance than the admission, that he is not disagreeable to her. In this case we might rest satisfied with it. But there is one consideration I cannot quite get over. Is not the Baron de la Croix, are not all his family, making an effort of generosity in asking for the hand of our little portionless daughter? It is so contrary to French usages for a young man to marry a girl without a fortune, that I cannot quite rest satisfied that it is not an overstrained point of honour which alone induces them to make this proposal.'

Madame d'Auban looked a little pained, her cheek flushed. 'Henri, do you give me credit for such a total absence of pride, as to think I should have spoken as I have done

if I had not seen beyond a doubt that the hearts of your friends are set upon this marriage;—had I not heard from Raoul's mother, expressions which seldom fall in these days from the lips of French mothers, as to her hopes and fears for the darling of her heart; as to her knowledge of what Mina is, and her intense desire that his destiny should be united to hers? She never mentions our child since the night of Osseo's death without tears in her eyes. But far be it from me, however, to urge you . . . ?

‘Enough, dearest, enough. I am more than satisfied,’ exclaimed d'Auban, who felt he had unintentionally slightly wounded his wife's feelings. Any destiny out of the common order, any transgression of the usual laws of society, even under the most favourable circumstances, at certain moments, sometimes long after old feelings and habits of mind have been apparently eradicated, tends to arouse slight emotions, delicate susceptibilities, which are like faint traces left on the soul of what once has been, visible only by certain lights.’

A conversation d'Auban held that even-

ing with the Baron proved to him the justice of his wife's appreciation of the old man's real feelings; he was so thoroughly happy at the thoughts of an alliance with the family to which his own had owed so much, so full of delight at acquitting a debt of gratitude as regarded the past, and he kindly added, pressing his friend's hand in both his, 'in incurring a fresh one in the shape of the holy and beautiful child he asked of them for his Raoul,' that it would have been playing an unkind and ungracious part to reject, from a false delicacy, the proposal so cordially made. He seemed a little surprised, indeed, when d'Auban stipulated that the betrothal was not to take place unless his little girl gave her full and free assent to it,—that her mother had made him promise this.

'But surely,' said the Baron, 'a young lady as well educated as Mademoiselle Mina, and of as amiable a disposition, would never dream of opposing her parents' wishes on such a subject.'

'My best of friends,' d'Auban answered, 'Mina's education, not a bad one, thank God, has yet been in many respects peculiar.

Events, more than teaching, have formed her character. She would doubtless obey our orders, but her mother's ideas on that point are strong, and she would never compel her daughter to marry, or to promise her hand to any one she did not herself freely choose.'

The idea of young ladies choosing their husbands was quite a new one to the baron, and utterly distasteful to him. He would like to see Bertha and Isaure think of choosing for themselves, indeed! And as to Raoul, when he had informed him that he was about to ask for Mademoiselle d'Auban's hand for him, he had behaved as well as possible, and expressed his perfect submission to his grandfather's wishes.

'But I suppose your daughter is not likely to object to the chevalier,' he said. 'He has, I hope, made himself agreeable to her since she arrived here?'

'I should think your grandson as likely as any youth I have ever seen to win a young lady's heart,' answered d'Auban; 'and I trust that I may have the happiness of calling him my son.'

On the morning of the next day, which was to be the last but one they were to spend at the Chateau de la Croix, Madame d'Auban sent for her daughter into her room from the library, where she had gone with Isaure, to copy some passages out of an old book of poetry they had been reading together, and when Mina came bounding into the room she found her father and mother sitting together. They made room for her between them, and he said to her :

‘Have you been very happy here, my daughter?’

‘Yes ; very happy,’ she answered. ‘Everybody has been so kind to me, and I love them all very much.’

‘They are all very fond of you, Mina. The Baron has been speaking to me about you.’

‘I was afraid he was a little angry with me, because I told Osseo to go away, instead of calling to the sentinels.’

‘Well, he seems to have forgiven you. He told me you were a brave little girl. I suppose you will be sorry to part with Isaure and Bertha?’

‘Yes; and with Raoul also.’

‘Ah! you like him. I am glad of that. I have taken a great fancy to Raoul. He is very pleasing, and so good and noble-hearted.’

‘He ought to be good, for his mother, oh, dearest papa! she is quite a saint. I like so much to watch her when she is speaking to a poor person, or dressing their wounds. There is a little room, quite out of the way, where they come to her every morning; but I know where it is, and she lets me help her. She does not speak much, but the few words she says are full of love and sweetness.’

‘Then you would be glad to live some day with Madame Armand?’

‘I would give the world to be like her.’

‘Then I think you will be glad to hear, my daughter, that she would like to call you her child?’

‘Would she?’ answered Mina, innocently; ‘then I wish she would.’

‘What I mean is that she and the Baron want you some time hence to marry Raoul, and to be at once affianced to him.’

Madame d’Auban’s heart beat fast as her

husband said this. Mina drew her arm from her neck and her hand from her father's, and sat up between them with her eyes fixed on the ground and the colour deepening in her cheeks. She did not speak. They remained silent also for a few minutes, and then her mother said :

‘ What is my Mina thinking of? Tell us, dearest, will you promise to marry Raoul ? ’

‘ No—no, I cannot promise to marry him. Oh, dearest papa, dearest mamma, do not ask me.’

‘ And why not, Mina ? ’ said d’Auban, looking vexed and disappointed.

‘ Because, papa, it would make me miserable ; because ’ . . . . a flood of tears stopped her utterance. She wept with what seemed passionate sorrow.

‘ My child,’ said her mother, anxiously, speak, explain to us what you feel.’

‘ Mamma, do you remember my telling you long ago that I would never marry a white man ? ’

‘ Oh, Mina, that old childish story ! ’ exclaimed her mother; and her father said with impetuosity :

‘ You are no longer a child, my daughter; and I cannot brook this infatuation about Indians. You do not suppose that we should ever consent to give our daughter in marriage to a red man?’

‘ I know you would not, papa, and I will never ask you to do so. But I wish to keep my promise.’

‘ A child’s promise! which does not bind you in the least, Mina.’

‘ Then, mamma, if I am too young to be bound by one promise, do not tell me to make another. I told Ontara I could not marry him, when we were at the Natches; and after he was baptised in Paris I said so again: but when he was unhappy I promised never to marry at all, and to be always his sister; and it comforted him a little. Mamma, don’t you remember that one day in Paris, when Julie d’Orgeville had been talking to me about her cousin Jeanne being forced to marry the old Count d’Hervilliers, and I asked you if you would make me marry against my will, you said, *never?* And, mamma, when you said it, I don’t know why, but there were tears in your eyes, and you added,

“No, my own, you will never know what it is to wear gilded chains.”

‘But, Mina darling, you like Raoul, and you would be very happy with him?’

A troubled look came into little Mina’s face; some large tears gathered in her eyes. She heaved two or three deep sighs, and then hiding her face in her mother’s bosom, she murmured :

‘I could not be happy if I broke my promise.’

Madame d’Auban fondly pressed her lips on her head, and, looking at her husband, smiled. Her womanly instinct was not at fault. She guessed what was passing in the child’s heart.

‘Mina,’ said her father, gravely, ‘if it is that foolish promise that weighs on your mind, Ontara would, I am sure, relieve you from it.’

Madame d’Auban shook her head.

Mina started up. ‘Oh, papa, that would not be really keeping it. If you order me to break it in that way I must, but my heart will break too. Mamma, you remember the day you took his hand and put it on my

head, when Osseo was going to force me away from you? We were friendless then; we were prisoners; and he had parents and friends, and brothers and sisters. We were condemned to death, and he saved me. He saved papa, who saved us all. And now he has only me—only me to love him, I must keep my promise.'

'Mina,' said her father, sitting down again by her, 'you are too young to understand what you give up when you say you will never marry.'

The heavenly expression they sometimes noticed in their child's face shone in it, as she looked up and said:

'I would give up anything to keep that promise.'

'And if, which I never shall, I was to say you might marry Ontara, would you marry him?'

Mina closed her eyes, thought a moment, and then said 'Yes,' but in a tone that made her mother thrill all over, there was something so peculiar in the child's way of saying it.

She made a sign to her husband not to

press the matter further ; and they talked to her gently and soothingly, and said she should not be asked to make any promise to Raoul or any one else ; that she might remain a child for some years to come, and plant flowers and sow seeds in a cottage garden at St. Denys.

She kissed them and went straight out on the steps which led to the church. At that moment Madame Armand's poor people were passing through the gate on their way to the room where she received them. A woman was staggering under the weight of a sick child, and seemed ready to drop.

Raoul, who was passing through the court with his dogs, whistling a merry tune, caught sight of the beggar, and taking her baby in his arms, carried it to his mother. It was one of those indeliberate impulses which show the tone of a man's feelings. He was off again in a moment, not, however, before he had slipped an alms into the woman's hand. He seemed to tread on air, his handsome face was beaming with animation, and snatches of an old French song burst from his lips as he passed the foot of the stairs.

He did not see Mina, who had been watching the little scene. She went into the church, and prayed a long time. It is said that St. Catherine of Sienna, in one of her mysterious visions, was offered her choice of a crown of roses and a crown of thorns. She chose the last, because it was like the one our Lord had worn. Had two different visions also passed before Mina's eyes, and had she made a similar choice?

## CHAPTER IX.

So rich a close,  
Too seldom crowns with peace affliction's woes.

*Mrs. Hemans.*

How often, oh, how often,  
I had wished that the ebbing tide  
Would bear me away on its bosom,  
O'er the ocean wild and wide!

For my heart was hot and restless,  
And my life was full of care,  
And the burden laid upon me  
Seemed greater than I could bear.

But now it has fallen from me,  
It is buried in the sea,  
And only the sorrow of others  
Throws its shadow over me.

*Longfellow.*

It had not been easy to induce the Baron de la Croix to give up his favourite idea of a betrothal between Raoul and Mina ; but her parents and Madame Armand, to whom Madame d'Auban had confided the grounds of her daughter's refusal, and her own belief that time would overcome her determination to lead a single life, out of fidelity to her

promise and affection for her deliverer, found means to persuade M. de la Croix that the engagement must be deferred, and the ring of espousals which he had sent for from Moulins put aside for the present.

D'Auban assured him that, on the whole, it was better the young people should be free till they met again in two or three years, and could better judge of their own feelings.

‘But I never heard of feelings in my youth,’ cried the baron. ‘The will of my father was the only feeling spoken of when I married Madame de la Croix; and nothing ever answered better than our marriage. But let it be as you wish. Wherever you are in three years’ time—whether at the north or the south pole—I shall send Raoul to ask for the hand of that pretty little heroine of yours, who, I hope, will not have found out by that time that she has feelings of her own. Feelings, forsooth! do you know, my dear d’Auban, that you have gained some strange ideas in the New World?’

‘Or by staying out of the Old one, my dear baron. It is wonderful how absence

modifies one's views of certain things. It takes time to tune oneself to the key of European civilisation.'

'Your daughter finds Raoul agreeable, I hope?'

'Indeed, she does; but truly, my dear friend, she is too much of a child fully to appreciate yet the honour you do her.'

'But why is she then so tall? she takes one in.'

'Ah! she has seen and felt too much for one so young.'

'Ah! feeling again! Feeling and thinking will be the ruin of the present generation.'

There was truth, in one sense, in the Baron's observation. The thinking of Voltaire, and the feeling of Rousseau, made wild havoc with the happiness and the virtue of the French people. Wit and sentiment are powerful agents when arrayed on the side of infidelity and vice. The old *émigré* who said to Madame de Coigny, one of the cleverest women of the beginning of this century, '*Madame, ce sont les gens d'esprit qui ont perdu la France!*' was not, perhaps, alto-

gether wrong, though it must have been tempting to answer, as she did, '*Ah, monsieur! et pourquoi donc ne l'avez-vous pas sauvée!*' But poor Mina's feelings were not of Rousseau's, or her father's philosophy of Voltaire's school; the Baron was quite satisfied that she was a modest and guileless child, and that his old friend was as staunch a Catholic as ever lived; but there was something he did not quite understand about them, something a little ahead of his own ideas of right and wrong; and it is curious how suspicious men are of what goes beyond their own standard, as much, and often more, than of what falls below it.

Raoul was very angry and very unhappy when his mother told him little Mina would not promise to marry him; and he took a long walk by himself, and would not speak to her all the evening. But before she went away, they made friends again, and she rode that last day the dun pony once more, and two or three times he saw her large dark blue eyes filling with tears, as Bertha and Isaure said affectionate things to her. And when he whispered, as he helped her off her horse in

the court of the castle, ‘You are not sorry to part with me, Mina ; you care only for my sisters !’ she blushed deeply, and said, ‘I do care for you, Raoul—only—’

‘Only what?’ he asked, as they both stood by the pony, patting his head.

She did not speak, her heart was so full ; she was afraid of crying.

‘Only you like a savage better than me. Oh, Mina, I cannot forgive you.’

‘I never said so,’ she said, hiding her face in the pony’s mane.

‘I know all about it,’ he said, stamping his foot. ‘I guessed it immediately. I should like to call him out.’

‘Oh, Raoul !’ she said, raising her tearful eyes to his, ‘who is a savage now ?’

‘But I cannot bear you to love him better than me.’

‘There are such different kinds of love. You never saved my life ; you never adopted me ; you are not alone in the world ; you have everything to make you happy, and he has nothing.’

‘If he has your love, Mina, he has everything I care to have. But you say you have

a kind of love for me. What sort of a love is it ?'

'I don't know ; I should like to die for him, if it would make him happy.'

'But you would like to spend your life with me—to be my wife ?'

'No ; I will never be anybody's wife.'

'I do not believe that, Mina. But will you make me a promise ? Will you promise not to marry anybody else, till I come in three years to see you in the Isle de Bourbon ?'

'I don't like to make any more promises,' Mina answered sadly. 'I do not think promises are good things. One must keep them, you know, Raoul. But I am sure I shall not marry till you come.'

This was said with a look which was very like a promise. He felt it as such, and he told his mother so. And after Mina went away, he was always thinking of these words, and of her look when they were said. And he often patted the dun pony, and fed it out of his hand ; and his sisters smiled when they saw how fond he was of it ; and Isaure peeped into his room, one day, and saw on his table

the book of old romances he used to read to them in the library, and the life of Father Claver, which Mina had forgot in hers. She was very sorry when she missed it. It was the book Ontario and she were to finish reading when they met again, and she had left it behind at the chateau. Had she left anything else behind? Not that she knew of, but her mother sometimes thought so.

Some months elapsed, and a ship was nearing the Isle de Bourbon. The passengers were standing on deck watching the coast becoming every moment more distinct. This vessel had had a long and wearisome passage. For three weeks it had been becalmed. Madame d'Auban thought of her voyage to America with the German emigrants, when her despair was at its height, and could not find it in her heart to complain now of the deep stillness which reigned on the sea; of the breezeless days and the sultry nights. Not but that she and her husband had anxious thoughts about the future. Not but that she dreaded, she scarcely knew why, the arrival at Bourbon. She had a presentiment—d'Auban

had never persuaded her out of her belief in them—that a crisis in their fate was at hand ; and perhaps, in spite of all the inconveniences of the voyage, she dreaded its coming to an end. But now the shores of the fair island, its verdant undulating hills with their grand background of mountains, rose before their eyes as they went on deck at sunrise. St. André and S<sup>te</sup>. Suzanne, and the bright little river of St. Jean, and St. Denys, the town where they were to land, were successively pointed out to them. As they drew nearer they discerned the negroes at work in the fields, and the planters' houses, and the people almost all dressed in white, and wearing straw hats.

‘Oh, mamma !’ Mina exclaimed, ‘there is a concession, and such a pretty habitation ! And oh look at those palm-trees, and at those pines, and at the oleanders and the orange-trees, and the black women gathering the blossoms. Is it not beautiful ? Is it not like Louisiana ?’

As the ship glided into the port, crowds gathered at the landing-place to watch the

disembarkation of the numerous passengers. A government officer came on board to examine the passports. They were handed to him, and as he read the names, he also attentively looked at the persons who presented them. When Colonel d'Auban's was given to him, he looked up quickly, and then said, in a low voice, to one of the men who accompanied him, 'These are the persons the governor expects. He is to be immediately informed of their arrival. Send this passport at once to the government house.'

Madame d'Auban overheard the whisper, and turned as pale as death. She was obliged to catch hold of her husband's arm to support herself. She instantly apprehended that a quicker sailing vessel than their own had previously arrived and brought orders to arrest them. This blow seemed almost more than she could bear. D'Auban had been looking ill again, and she had fixed her hopes on the benefit he would derive from a warm climate and a settled mode of life. The fear of fresh troubles and miseries seemed quite to overwhelm her.

‘It was hard,’ she thought, ‘if they were not suffered to live in obscurity in this remote island.’

Tired and exhausted, she began to weep bitterly, regardless of the bystanders. It was that sort of weeping induced by fatigue even more than by grief, but which, when joined with it, can neither be stayed nor checked. Her husband, who did not know the cause of her distress, hurried her on shore. Though the passport had not been returned, no one opposed their landing. Madame d’Auban and Mina were conveyed in a litter to the house of M. Thirlemont, a gentleman to whom a friend in Paris had recommended them, and who, with the well-known hospitality of the Bourbon creoles, had invited the new comers to take up their abode with him. He was one of the wealthiest landowners of the island, and his habitation just outside the town, almost a palace. When the litter, carried by four blacks, stopped in front of the entrance door, he came out with his wife to greet their guests. When Madame Thirlemont caught sight of them, she cried out, ‘It is Madame d’Auban, monsieur, I told you it must

be her ;' and to the astonishment of that lady she clasped her to her breast.

At the first instant neither Mina nor her mother recollected who she was, but after a minute both exclaimed almost at the same time, ' Madame Lenoir !'

' Ah ! not any longer Madame Lenoir,' answered their hostess, as she led them through the hall into the drawing-room. ' A life of single blessedness did not suit me at all. M. Thirlemont came on business to New Orleans soon after our deliverance from those abominable savages. I am sure we can never be thankful enough to Colonel d'Auban,' she turned round and bowed to him, ' for so gallantly coming to our rescue. Ah, my charming Mina, I hope since you have been in Paris, you have got over your preference for those wicked wretches who so nearly murdered us. But as I was telling you, M. Thirlemont offered me his hand, and I have really had no reason to regret having accepted it, though of course I did not do so without much hesitation, seeing all I had gone through in consequence of my first marriage. Not that I mean to say that it was

M. Lenoir's fault, poor man! Ah Madame d'Auban, when we used to talk over our mutual sorrows, I was most to be pitied. Providence was, however, preparing for me a happy compensation,' this was said with a sweet smile and glance at M. Thirlemont, whose jovial countenance and loud cheerful laugh seemed indeed calculated to offer a contrast to the tragical passages of Madame Lenoir's history.

After some further conversation had taken place, and just as Madame Thirlemont was about to conduct her guests to their apartments, a servant came into the room and presented a letter to M. Thirlemont. He hastily read it, and then placed it in his wife's hands. A cloud suddenly overshadowed her face, and her demeanour to her guests became cold and dignified. The letter was from the governor. It was a most puzzling one. There was no guessing its drift. ' His excellency requested M. Thirlemont, at whose house he understood Colonel and Madame d'Auban had arrived, not on any account to let them depart before he had seen them, and added, that as soon

as some pressing business he had on hand was concluded, he would come there himself, as he wished for a private interview with his guests.'

The messenger who had brought this missive was cross-questioned by Madame Thirlemont, who went out to speak to him.

'The governor,' he said, 'had appeared excited when he heard of Colonel d'Auban's arrival, and immediately sent to enquire where they were gone. He had been ordered to lose no time in delivering the letter his excellency had written.'

Madame Thirlemont made her plans. It struck her this was an emergency which required prudence and resolution. She hastened back to the drawing-room, and once more proposed to conduct Madame d'Auban to the chamber prepared for her, and then by a bold stroke, which might, if necessary, be explained away as an accident, she locked the door and carried away the key. Then rushing to the one where her husband had just left d'Auban, she took the same precaution.

'What are you doing, madame?' exclaimed

the astonished M. Thirlemont, who was still in the passage.

The lady placed her finger on her lips, and drew her husband into a small room on the ground floor, which was his own sitting room. There she was proceeding also to lock the door, but this he would not stand.

‘Madame, are you gone out of your mind?’ he asked.

‘She again laid her finger on her lips, and answered, in an impressive whisper, ‘Monsieur, this is not the time for irrelevant, and I might add, indecorous exclamations. We are in a position of the greatest, of the most awful, responsibility. If I was liable to go out of my mind, I suppose I should have done so when M. Lenoir was murdered, or on the night when I so narrowly escaped being a martyr.’ Madame Thirlemont’s idea of martyrdom consisted in dying a painful death, and going in consequence as a matter of course to heaven, a sort of *pisaller* which she evidently thought we must all come to at last.

‘As I did not go out of my mind *then*, I suppose I shall not do so now, though the

circumstances in which we are placed might very reasonably drive one mad . . .

‘ Oh! if you please do not go mad, madame; that would only make matters worse, whatever the matter is; but— ’

‘ Do not say *but*, M. Thirlemont. Look the matter in the face, and give your attention to it. These people are the same who were in Louisiana at the time of the Natches insurrection. M. d’Auban led the force which delivered me and many others from the hands of the savages, and I saw them afterwards in New Orleans.’

‘ Well, but what of that?’

‘ Oh! very well, M. Thirlemont; if it is “ Well, but what of that!” — if I am considered a fool—if everything I say is turned into ridicule, I have done. M. Lenoir would not have acted in that way; he had reliance on my judgment; he never did anything but by my advice — ’

‘ And ended by being murdered, poor man !’ ejaculated, in an incautious moment, M. Thirlemont.

This was indeed a fair ground of attack; a justifiable theme for his injured wife to

descant upon. He had accused her of some sort of complicity with her first husband's murderers—of having, at least, recommended him to follow the course which led to that result; and there seemed for some time little prospect of M. and Madame d'Auban being released from captivity, or M. Thirlemont from the conjugal tête-à-tête, to judge from the torrent of words, pathetic, passionate, and utterly senseless, which flowed from his wife's lips. But it came to an end at last, and when she paused to take breath he enquired once again, but taking care to avoid any offensive insinuation, why their guests were to be suspected because they had been in Louisiana at the time of the insurrection, and shared, with many others, and Madame Thirlemont herself, the sufferings of the colonists. She then explained that somebody at New Orleans had once said to her that there were strange stories about the d'Aubans. No details had been given. One of those assertions had been made which, like the seed blown about by the wind, and which gives birth to many a noxious weed, propagates mischief with fatal facility. A strange story about some-

body, which the speaker himself does not know much about, has often done more harm than a positive calumny. A direct charge friends can reply to. But who could always deny that, in their own or others lives, there have been no strange stories? The few who knew the details of the one we have been describing, could certainly not have denied its strangeness.

‘But why lock them up?’ persisted M. Thirlemont. ‘Whatever stories there may be about or against them, I do not see the use of that.’

‘Not see the use of it? Why, does not the governor charge you not to let them go till he comes?’

‘But he cannot intend that we should keep them prisoners. He would have had them arrested, if such had been his meaning. For heaven’s sake, go and unlock those doors before he arrives. I declare there is the sound of a horse’s feet in the avenue! Give me the keys, and go and meet his excellency.’

Madame Thirlemont hurried into the hall, and confronted with no little trepidation the

Governor-General M. de La Bourdonnais, who had never honoured her before with a visit. She curtseyed profoundly, and at once proceeded to assure him that it was by the merest chance in the world that the strangers who were just arrived happened to be at her house. From the first moment of their arrival, she had had suspicions that there was something unsatisfactory about them; indeed, it had been quite against her advice that M. Thirlemont had shown them hospitality: but gentlemen would have their own way. . . . M. de La Bourdonnais patiently awaited the ebbing of this tide of self-defence, a slightly sarcastic smile hovering on his lips, and then requested to be shown into a room where he could see M. and Madame d'Auban. He was accordingly ushered into the drawing-room, where M. Thirlemont had politely led his guests, who had been perfectly unaware of their temporary imprisonment. Madame d'Auban, when she heard that the governor wished for an interview with her husband and herself, had trembled from head to foot, and the respectful manner with which he approached her only tended to heighten her fears. In her

husband's heart a feeling of indignation was rising. Wild thoughts were passing through his mind about the tyranny of kings and the iron yoke of despotism. Both saw at once that her position was perfectly known, and that a crisis in their fates must be at hand. Still both preserved their self-command, and received with courtesy the governor's greetings. After a few preliminary remarks and enquiries as to their health, the length of their voyage, and their first impressions of the island, he said that the last ship from France had brought an order from his majesty (Madame d'Auban became very pale) to name Colonel d'Auban to the post of sub-governor of the island ; and to offer him also the direction of all the agricultural operations carried on by the government in its own domains. He was also desired by the king to place at Madame d'Auban's disposal the habitation of St. André, one of the most salubrious and agreeable residences in the neighbourhood of St. Deny's ; 'as desirable a one,' he added, in a low voice, 'as the island could offer for a lady of exalted rank.'

A deep flush overspread Madame d'Auban's

cheek, which soon subsided. She looked at her husband. Their eyes met. 'The king is very good,' she said, in a faltering voice. Then hiding her face in her hands, burst into tears. M. de La Bourdonnais, with a well-bred delicacy of feeling, led away M. d'Auban to another part of the room, and gave him some details about the post to which he was appointed, the emoluments of which had been doubled by his majesty's commands. He soon took leave of him and his wife with a courtesy and a kindness which ever afterwards marked his manner and conduct towards them. He made a gracious bow to Madame Thirlemont as he passed her in the anteroom, and advised her and her husband to hasten and pay their respects to the new sub-governor of the island, to whom they had so amicably extended hospitality. This was said with a smile, which had in it a slight mixture of French malice, the most different thing in the world from malice in English.

The poor hostess experienced as strong, if not as interesting, a revulsion of feeling, as that which her guests had felt a moment

before, when the announcement had been made to them of so unexpected a happiness. She quivered all over. She repassed in her memory every word she had uttered, every civility she had omitted or performed towards the new dignitaries. She went back in thought even to the old days at the Natches, and to the night when she and Madame d'Auban had been about to die side by side. She was very glad of her good fortune, and when, on entering the room, the pale, gentle woman who had suffered so much, came forward to meet her with tears in her eyes, but a smile on her lips, the good feelings of her heart overcame her uneasiness, and she, too, wept for joy at another's happiness. For it was happiness she could understand and sympathise in, that of being sub-governess of the Isle de Bourbon, and enjoying a good income, and possessing the best house in the island. She did not know of the relief, the peace, the release from the disquietude of ceaseless apprehension that was pervading the heart of one by whose side she sat, whose hand she held. She sympathised with the obvious good fortune which had befallen

Madame d'Auban, and did not at all wonder at an emotion, the cause of which she little appreciated. It did not seem to her at all excessive for the occasion. She would have been herself much more agitated if M. Thirlmont had been named sub-governor of the island. On the whole, Madame d'Auban took it very calmly, she thought. Yes! she was calm with the calmness of one who has long battled with the waves, and has reached a peaceful shore; calm with the calmness of a heart at rest. Calm as those are from whom a great anguish has passed away, to whom a great blessing has been vouchsafed. She could lie down and rise in peace. Her husband was now her own. The fear of separation was no longer before her eyes. His energies would be once more directed in high and useful channels. The house promised to them was all they could desire. Its vicinity to the sea would, she knew, be to d'Auban an immense enjoyment, like a friend of his childhood, cheering his declining years. If the trees round St. André were not so grand as those of the primæval forests; if the flowers did not blossom as spontaneously

in its gardens as in the wild pleasure-grounds of Louisiana, there would be beauty in abundance about their new abode, and more repose, more security, a stronger home-feeling in their position, than in the lodge in the wilderness so much loved in former days.

Before the Governor left, he had placed in Madame d'Auban's hands a sealed packet, containing letters which explained the change in their fortunes. There was a long one from the Comte de Saxe. He spoke of his own surprise at her departure, which he felt somewhat afraid of announcing to the king. Important political events had, however, happily supervened, and turned his majesty's thoughts in another direction ; and some days elapsed, during which no inquiries were made as to the princess and the interview which the comte had had with her.

In the meantime, the Queen of Hungary's reply to the king's letter arrived. It expressed in courteous terms her majesty's gratitude for the French monarch's information on a point so deeply interesting to her. Her royal relation, she assured him, would

be most warmly welcomed by her, and every honour and attention due to her rank paid to the sister of her late mother. His majesty's gracious offers with regard to the gentleman whom the princess had espoused in America, and the child that had been born there, would, doubtless, be gratefully accepted by all parties. It would, of course, be impossible, as his majesty justly observed, that the princess, restored to her rightful position, and received by her as her aunt, should acknowledge that person as her husband. But she trusted that a separation so inevitable under the circumstances, and softened by the generous goodness of his majesty to all parties, would be acquiesced in without difficulty.

‘On the receipt of this letter, the king immediately sent for me,’ wrote the count. ‘He had it in his hand when I entered, and after reading it aloud, he said, “ You must immediately communicate this important intelligence to the Princess Charlotte of Brunswick, and advise with her as to the time and manner in which she desires to avail herself of her royal niece's invitation. I have received a favourable report of Colonel d'Auban's

character and abilities, and I shall take care of his fortune. It is fortunate that the princess did not marry an adventurer." I felt myself obliged to broach at once the state of the case to his majesty. "Sire," I said, "women have always been unaccountable beings; they never feel or act as we should expect. What will your majesty think, when I tell him that the Princess Charlotte has eloped with her husband?" The king started. "When?" "A few days ago, sire." "Why did not you inform me of this at once, M. de Saxe?" "I did not know it myself, sire, till after the princess was gone; and I have since been occupied in seeking to discover where the married lovers have fled." "And have you succeeded in doing so?" "Sire, they have sailed for the Island of Bourbon." "What an extraordinary infatuation!" said the king. "Strange, indeed," I answered with a sigh. "But there is no reasoning with a woman when she happens to be fond of her husband." The king laughed and said: "The queen is capable of admiring her. But what can we do for them, M. de Saxe?" "Leave them alone, sire: wilful people deserve to suffer."

“‘Suffer !’ his majesty said, ‘‘You do not mean that the princess is without fortune ?’’

‘‘I answered nothing ; and the king, after a moment’s thought, exclaimed :

‘‘I will make M. de Fréjus write to M. de La Bourdonnais and desire him to treat Madame d’Auban with the greatest consideration, and to bestow upon her husband the post of sub-governor of the island which happens to be vacant since M. d’Eperville’s death. Will that do, M. de Saxe ?’’

‘‘I kissed his majesty’s hand with more fervent gratitude, madame, than when his majesty promised me the next ‘bâton de Maréchal de France.’’

‘‘And I suppose,’’ the King said, ‘‘that I must inform the Queen of Hungary that her royal aunt has played truant, and left us all in the lurch. Upon my word, M. de Saxe, I like her for it. But I wish I had seen those blue eyes I have so often heard of.’’

‘‘Madame, I have but a few words to add. By his majesty’s desire I secretly informed your royal highness’s brother and the other leading members of your family of the

extraordinary events already disclosed to her majesty the Queen of Hungary, of the decision you had taken, madame, and of your recent departure from France. The answers returned to this communication all agreed in acquiescing in the course your royal highness has adopted. In the complicated state of affairs between Russia and the German powers, it is deemed advisable that the existence of the Czarovitch's widow should not be brought forward to public notice. Had your royal highness claimed from your relatives the recognition which would have enabled you to resume your position, they would have felt themselves bound to accede to your desire, and publicly to acknowledge your identity. But under existing circumstances, the course your royal highness's own wishes have marked out is considered by the duke your brother, and the other members of your family, as the most conducive to your peace of mind, and the tranquillity of your relatives. They are desirous, however, to secure to your royal highness an annual income sufficient to remove all pecuniary embarrassments in the position chosen by

yourself, and have entrusted to my care the necessary arrangements for this purpose. I am charged, madame, to express to your royal highness the affectionate sentiments of your royal brother and of your other relatives, and their regret that an unprecedented destiny should have placed an insuperable bar between persons so closely allied by the ties of consanguinity.'

The day came to an end at last, and Madame d'Auban was alone in her room with her husband and her daughter. They could sit quietly together, looking back to the four last years of their lives as to a feverish dream, and forward with grateful hearts to one of usefulness and peace. If they had been allowed to choose for themselves, they could not have fixed on a destiny more in accordance with their wishes than the one Providence had assigned to them. From the window, where they were sitting, they could see their future habitation in the midst of orange gardens and coffee plantations, and trees bending under the weight of the most beautiful fruits, the blue sea breaking gently on the smooth yellow coast; the evening breeze

rippling its surface without stirring its depths. They could scarcely speak, their hearts were too full.

‘My Mina, is not this a beautiful land?’ said her father, looking fondly at his child.

‘An earthly Paradise,’ murmured her mother, clasping her to her breast.

Mina threw her arms round her neck and covered her with kisses. Then she followed with her eyes her father’s hand as he pointed out to her the habitation of St. André, and they rested on the sugar-cane and cotton fields, and on long lines of negroes marching home from their work, followed by an overseer with a whip in his hand. She cried:

‘O how beautiful is the sea! and how lovely the trees and the sky! and the most beautiful thing of all, mamma, is the smile on your face. I have not seen you smile quite in that way since we left St. Agathe!’

‘Papa,’ she said, gently stroking her father’s hand, ‘you will have to manage a great many plantations here besides the one we see from this window, round St. André.’

‘Yes, my sweetest; please God, we may do some good here.’

‘ You will have a great many slaves?’

‘ Yes, my child ; there is no work done here except by slaves.’

‘ I wish I had not left Father Claver’s Life at the Château de la Croix, papa. There are no slaves there. I should like to read it again here.’

‘ Do not you know it by heart, Mina?’ said her father, smiling.

‘ *Almost* by heart,’ she answered slowly, with her eyes again turning towards the plantations, and the long files of black men bearing their burthens home. The story of that life-long apostleship amongst the slaves of Brazil had, indeed, been conned by the young girl till it had awakened thoughts which—

Condensed within her soul,  
And turned to purpose strong.

There is happiness, real, intense happiness in this world. How should we guess at the joy of heaven, if we had never tasted happiness on earth? There are moments when our hearts seem too full of bliss for their strength. When an innocent ardent wish is fulfilled ; when a great happiness has come

to one we love more than ourselves ; when a long anguish is at an end, or a new gladness has come to our homes, there is a light, a brightness, a radiance thrown over our lives beautiful in its way, and it is often good to have felt it. Pure earthly joys are blossoms which often bear fruit when they are themselves withered and gone. And there are Hallowtide summers in the autumn of life which have a softened brilliancy of their own—breathing times allowed in the race of existence. Such were the years which followed the arrival of the wanderers in the Island of Bourbon. By the dark blue sea he so much loved, amidst the spicy groves and orange flowers of that delicious land, in the performance of pleasant duties and the fullest enjoyment of domestic happiness, their hearts overflowing with affection for each other and for their child ; beloved by their dependants ; all but worshipped by their slaves, whose fate was exceptionally happy, and generally liked by their neighbours ; months and years went by in peaceful serenity. Some colonists, indeed, were wont to remark that Colonel d'Auban had eccentric ideas on certain points.

He had been known to invite to dinner a well-educated quadroon, and to take into his house the widow of a man who had died of a broken heart, because his father had cursed and disinherited him for marrying a woman with negro blood in her veins ; and he permitted his daughter to do extraordinary things, which did not always meet with public approval. But the girl was so beautiful, and so beloved, and looked so like an angel, that much was not said on that score. And Madame d'Auban we would fain take leave of her in her pretty rooms, or her charming garden ; greeting every friend with kind words, every stranger with a courteous smile, every sufferer with soothing sympathy. Less active than of yore, for the climate was enervating, she often reclined on a couch in the verandah, whence she could see the waves rippling on the shore, and the white vessels nearing the coast. Visitors crowded about the sub-governor's lovely wife, and whispers went abroad that she was not born a thousand miles away from a palace. Rumours more or less removed from the truth, but generally credited in the island, ascribed

her ample means, her boundless generosity, and the union in her manner of courteousness and dignity, of kindness and reserve, to a regal origin, vaguely and variously hinted at. Yes, it would be well thus to part with her. The present is bright, and the future smiling. For Raoul de la Croix is soon coming to seek his young bride, now no longer portionless, and when Mina is happily married there will be nothing left for her mother to wish. This would be a pleasant way of concluding a tale ; but the story, the legend, if you will, which we have been endeavouring to illustrate, ends not here ; and there are some who may wish to trace to its close the course of so strange a life. For them the following pages are written. Let others close the book, if from weariness they have not done so yet.

## CHAPTER X.

Here I fain would end,  
 Leaving her harbour'd; but her stern kind fates,  
 Not thus forwent her. Like her life, her death;  
 Not negative or neutral; great in pains,  
 In consolations greater. *Aubrey de Vere.*

Slowly across the gleaming sky,  
 A crowd of white angels are passing by;  
 Like a fleet of swans they float along,  
 Or the silver notes of a dying song,  
 Like a cloud of incense their pinions rise,  
 Fading away up the purple skies.  
 But hush, for the silent glory is stirred,  
 By a strain such as earth has never heard.

Open, Oh heaven! we bear her,  
 This gentle maiden mild,  
 Earth's griefs we gladly spare her,  
 From earthly joys we tear her,  
 Still undefiled.

And to thine arms we bear her,  
 Thine own, thy child.

Open, Oh heavens! no morrow  
 Will see this joy o'ercast,  
 No pain, no tears, no sorrow,  
 Her gentle heart will borrow;  
 Sad life is past.

Shielded and safe from sorrow,  
 At home at last. *Adelaide Proctor.*

MANY years later than the date of the last chapter, at the close of a November day, in Brussels, the shutters were being closed in

the small sitting-room of a *rez de chaussée* in the *rue du Parc*, not far from the Cathedral of St. Gudule. A lamp had just been placed on the table, where an elderly lady, dressed in black, was tying up a variety of parcels, and writing upon them the names of the articles they contained.

‘Antoine,’ she said to the old man who was stirring the fire and trying to make the room comfortable, ‘is not to-morrow the day that the case must be sent to the Foreign Missions?’

‘To-day is Thursday; to-morrow consequently Friday. Yes, madame, I must take it to the office before four o’clock.’

Then lingering by the table as if glad of an excuse for remaining in the room, he glanced at the parcels and said—

‘My goodness! how glad Père Marie Guillaume will be when he looks at all these fine things! Let me see; madame sends him six dozen crucifixes—he asked for three dozen in his last letter—and as many dozens of rosaries and pictures; and the Gospels just printed in Paris, in the Indian language; and a chalice, a very handsome one too! and vest-

ments they would not despise at St. Gudule. Faith! the good father will be famously well set up. And what are these things, I wonder. Clothes, I declare; red and blue and yellow handkerchiefs for Mesdames les Sauvagesses, as poor M. de Chambelle used to say. Madame knows how to please them.'

'Somebody is ringing, Antoine. It is perhaps M. le Curé, or the nuns of St. Charles.'

Antoine went to the door, and remained for a few minutes in conversation with the person outside. When he came back into the room he looked a little excited.

'A gentleman asks to see madame—somebody she knows very well, but whom she has not seen for a long time.'

'Who is it?' she quickly answered.

'Madame, it is the Comte Maréchal de Saxe.'

Madame d'Auban, for the pale and now grey-headed woman in this little lodging was the same who, during half a century of her earthly pilgrimage, had gone through such extraordinary vicissitudes, heaved a deep sigh and passed her thin hand over her brow.

‘Beg M. le Maréchal to come in,’ she said, and rose to receive him.

There was but little visible emotion in her manner when first they met. He seemed embarrassed, as persons often are when they come into the presence of one whom they suppose to be in great affliction. She greeted him kindly, but a careless observer would have said, coldly—

‘It is very good of you to have thought of me, M. de Saxe. Several years have elapsed since my return to Europe, and during all that time I have not seen anyone I used to know. You are looking well. I perceive time has dealt leniently with you. It is only in fame that you can be considered old.’

This was said with a smile which recalled to his mind, though faintly, the smiles of other days.

‘And you, madame,’ he answered, ‘you whom fate has so cruelly used. . . .’

She waved her hand, and interrupted him. ‘No, my dear friend, say not so; God has been very good to me.’

‘For a moment neither of them spoke, he looked at her faded eyes, her gray hair, tied

and turned up according to the fashion of the day, but not powdered, only bound by a black ribbon, and a cap such as widows wore at that period. He remembered how those pale blue eyes had flashed the last time they had met at the thought of a human power thrusting itself between her and those she loved, and now, 'the fire has gone out of them; quenched by many tears,' he said to himself. And then he glanced at a picture over the chimney, but quickly turned his eyes away till he saw that hers were fixed upon it.

'Do you think it like?' she asked.

'I never saw in my life anything so like,' he answered; and then after a little hesitation, said, 'Madame, I have never forgotten that face. It has haunted me at strange times, and in strange ways. Is it painful to you to speak of her?'

'No, Maurice, I find a sweetness in it. Except sometimes to my old servant, I never breathe her name. But it is not because I fear to do so. You remember her, then?'

'I see her as if she was still standing before me with her wonderful beauty, and

that gaze which had in it all a woman's tenderness and a child's simplicity. It was not her mind only, but her whole soul which seemed to speak in her face. Ah, madame! how could death be so cruel as to rob you of that fair creature? How dared it to approach her?

‘She did not think it cruel, she welcomed it with a smile, and the last words on her lips were *Deo gratias*.’

‘Was it a sudden illness snatched her from your arms, princess, or did you watch the slow decline of that young existence?’

‘Do you wish to hear about her, M. de Saxe? Would you like her mother to relate to you the life and death of the little girl you remember so well?’

‘Nothing could interest me more. But you, dear friend, have you the strength to go through this recital?’

‘I should wish you to know what she was. How in the words of the Bible, “Being perfect in a short space she fulfilled a long time.” Ever since she could think or speak, Mina’s passion, if I may so speak, was charity. At the time you knew her, the temporal

sufferings and the spiritual necessities of the people amongst whom she was born, the Indians of North America, were continually in her thoughts, and her attachment to the young Indian who had adopted her as his sister at the period of our captivity, partly, arose from this engrossing feeling. She looked upon him as the representative of that suffering race, and before we left France, she refused the hand of the Chevalier de la Croix, whom we wished her to marry, on account of the promise she had made to this Indian not to marry a white man. She seemed to consider it as a pledge to devote herself in some form or other to his, and, as she called them, her own people. We did not thwart her on this point, which we looked upon as a childish fancy. She was too young at that time to be married, and the chevalier's parents were willing to wait. After our arrival at Bourbon, and our establishment at St. André, the slaves became the object of her intense solicitude. Whilst we were still in America, at the convent I believe, she had become possessed of a life of Father Peter Claver, which had made the

deepest impression upon her. You are not a Catholic, Maurice, but you may have heard of this wonderful man ?'

' Is not he the priest who was called the apostle of the Brazils ? '

' Yes ; for forty years and more he laboured under the burning sun of South America, and devoted himself, soul and body, to the conversion of the negroes in and around Carthagena. His life was spent in consoling, relieving, and instructing them. In the pestilential holds of the slave ships he went to greet them on their arrival. He passed whole days in the noisome buildings to which they were consigned on landing, breathing an air which after a few minutes caused the strongest men to faint away. He followed them to the scenes of their labours ; to the homes of their purchasers. He mediated between them and their masters, and exposed himself to ill treatment for their sakes. It was given to him to work miracles in their behalf ; the hearts of cruel men softened when he spoke ; cupidity and cruelty stayed their hands at his word. M. de Saxe, from the moment of our arrival at St. André, Mina

took this holy man for her model; and I dare to say that in her measure, and with her feeble strength, she copied into her own the features of that saintly life. The same love which burnt in his heart, inflamed hers. It was a consuming fire. It sustained her strength, even whilst her fragile form wasted away. It could not be stayed. We could not, dared not, stop her work. She would have obeyed our commands, but the effort would have destroyed her more quickly than the work itself. What that child effected in three years is almost incredible. How many she instructed, converted, and reconciled to their fate. How many she brought to be sincere Christians, instead of nominal converts. How many she saved from cruel treatment; for she sometimes succeeded where the magistrates, and even the governor himself, had no power, and priests no influence. There was scarcely a slaveowner in the neighbourhood who would not listen to her when she begged, on her knees, and as a favour to herself, the remission of a sentence or the pardon of a runaway slave. She was so beautiful, so engaging, so eloquent. M. de

La Bourdonnais, that great and good man, now in the Bastille, for having dared to defend the cause of humanity and good faith against the passions and prejudices of interested men, used to say that when discouragement at the sight of evil which all his efforts could not prevent stole upon him, the sight of Mina at work amongst the slaves, strengthened and cheered him. And the poor negroes of our own plantations, how they worshipped her ! And with what wonder those freshly imported from Africa looked upon the white angel who met them on their arrival ! Many of them, when they landed after the horrors of the passage, were sunk into sullen despair. They were persuaded that nothing but tortures and death awaited them, and would not listen to any white man, whether priest or layman. But Mina could always gain a hearing. She had learnt the Angola language, which most of them speak ; or, if they belonged to other tribes, her early acquaintance with the use of signs gave her facilities for communicating with them. I really believe that at first they took her for a celestial visitant. No other European

woman came near them. The sight of their wounds—the stench of the places they inhabited on first landing—kept them away, even from the vicinity of these buildings. But she used to go with her father or with Antoine. I can see her before me, even now, starting on these errands of mercy; her face literally beaming with joy; her large straw hat shielding it from the sun; the wide pockets of her green silk apron filled with sweetmeats and biscuits, whilst some of our own slaves carried behind her fruit and wine and cooling drinks. The angel in the fiery furnace, breathing a moist refreshing wind through its flames, could scarcely have been more welcome than this dear child in those haunts of woe. She used, her father told me, to kiss the children and embrace the women. He hardly liked to see her do it, so loathsome sometimes were those poor wretches; but the effect was unfailing. Their hearts were touched, and despair vanished before her like a dark mist before the sunshine. And it was all done so simply, so joyously! It was such a real joy to her. When notice was given us of

the arrival of a ship laden with slaves, her impatience to rush to the port, her active preparations, her solicitude as to the selection of her little gifts and offerings, was like that of an affectionate child anticipating the arrival of much-loved relatives. M. de Saxe, am I wearying you ?'

‘ Madame, I remember once saying to your angelic daughter, that next to fighting battles, I loved to hear of them. Next to the happiness of performing heroic deeds, is that of listening to the record of such a life as hers.’

‘ We saw that she was growing every day more delicately fair, her complexion more transparent, and the light in her eyes more unearthly in its brightness. But there was no feebleness in her step—no alteration in her spirits. She was always ready for every exertion. No call upon her strength seemed to tax it too much. She used to ride with her father, or with our old servant if he was too busy, to every hut in the neighbourhood where there was sickness, to every spot where help or consolation was needed. Sometimes, if a great wrong was done, or some act of

cruelty committed towards a slave which she could not prevent, a passionate burst of grief and indignation would shake her frail form, and bring out a crimson spot upon the marble paleness of her cheek. She would go into a church, or into her own little room, and I have heard her pray for hours prostrate on the ground. I have no doubt her prayers were heard, and often obtained what she sought.

‘Three years and more had elapsed since we had left France. One day a letter came which announced the approaching arrival of the Chevalier de la Croix. A singular feeling came over both my husband and myself, as we found afterwards, though at the time we did not know how to put it into words, and did not mention it to each other. We wished as much as ever this marriage to take place, but we dreaded to speak of it to Mina. Less than ever we felt that she could be constrained in the free exercise of her choice of a state of life. Perhaps she would still plead the old promise, the old allegiance she had alleged three years before. She had not alluded to it again, nor had we spoken to her of mar-

riage. Letters had passed between her and Ontara. He seemed to be making rapid progress in knowledge and in virtue. In two years his studies would be finished, and then he hoped to visit us in our new home. One day, about this time, she received one from him, and the expression in her face whilst she read it, immediately showed me that its contents were deeply interesting. An exclamation burst from her lips ; she let the letter drop, and clasping her hands together, she bent her head over them, pouring forth thanksgivings, as I found afterwards, but at the moment I felt uneasy, not knowing if she was sorrowing or rejoicing. But the instant she raised it, I saw it was joyful emotion which filled her soul.

‘ What is it, dearest ? ’ I asked, still feeling anxious.

“ ‘ I am too happy ! ’ she cried. “ Oh, too, too happy ! It is what I have longed and prayed for. Ontara is going to be a priest. God has put it into his heart to devote himself to His service, and to that of his brethren. As soon as he is ordained, he will be sent to the Missions of New France to preach the Gospel

to his own people. Oh, dearest mamma, I am so happy ; I have nothing left to wish. He will do for them what I could never have done. Mamma, you know the Indians were my first love, though I am so fond of our poor negroes now."

' Well, I was very happy also, and yet my heart was not free from a vague uneasiness. I have always been a believer in presentiments ; is it not one of our German traditions ? Some days afterwards we spoke to Mina of Raoul's approaching arrival, and her father said to her :

' " Now, my Mina, that Ontara has renounced every worldly tie, I suppose you consider yourself free from a promise which we always told you was not binding ? "

' She smiled, and answered—

' " Oh yes, he gives me back my promise in his last letter. I do not think he thought of it, of late at least, as seriously as I did."

' " And have you now any difficulty in receiving Raoul de la Croix as your future husband ? "

' I have never forgotten the expression of her face when this question was put to her.

She did not seem troubled or grieved, or glad, but a tender, thoughtful look came over it. She took up her long accustomed position between us, joined our hands together, and then kissing them, said, "Would it make you happy?" Her father said, "Yes." I kissed her without speaking. "Let him come," she said; "dear Raoul, I shall be so glad to see him." My dear friend, he came, and she received him with that holy serenity of expression which you see in her picture. It was taken at that time. She showed him much affection, maidenly, tender, gentle love. He was all that we could desire, good, generous, and brave. He had treasured up in his heart the remembrance of Mina, as he had known her at fourteen, and he all but worshipped the girl of seventeen who was about to become his wife; but he has since told me that though he fell passionately in love with her, he had, from the first moment of his arrival, a misgiving that there was something too pure, too ethereal, he had almost said, too divine about her for an earthly bride. I think myself that she had a clear presentiment of her approaching

death, and did not expect to live to marry him. She seemed very happy during the weeks which followed his arrival. Two or three times she said, "I am so glad Raoul is come. I am so glad you will have a son." I used to listen to his joyous laugh and her sweet voice mingling together, as they sat on the seashore, like the whispering of the breeze and the ripple of the waves. She seemed willing to give up much of her time to him, and was always ready to talk and to laugh when he was in the humour for it. Poor Raoul! he is now married, and has children, but I do not think as long as he lives he will forget those conversations in the shaddock grove, by the blue southern sea. I observed that she visited by turns all her poor negroes, and made them little presents as if taking leave of them, though nothing had yet been said about her departure from Bourbon. We knew she must go to Europe if she married, but no definite time had been mentioned.'

Madame d'Auban paused, and the Maréchal de Saxe exclaimed abruptly, 'You cannot

go on. I am sure you cannot go on !' His eyes were full of tears.

'Yes,' she said, 'I will tell you all. This is probably the last time we shall meet, and the last time I shall speak of her to one whom I knew and she knew. I should not have done so, perhaps, but that a short time before she died, she said she hoped I should see you again, and that I was to give you her love.'

Tears were now running down the maréchal's cheeks, and he murmured, 'God bless her !'

'It was one morning, on a very hot day, that she fell ill, that is, if that painless, quiet sinking into the arms of death, which it was, could be called an illness. A ship laden with slaves had arrived in the night, and when she heard of it, as usual, she prepared to ride to St. Denys. But when on the point of starting, she fainted away, and was obliged to lie down. Antoine went alone with their usual attendants. I saw a change in her face and in her manner. She did not seem grieved, as she would usually have been, to give up this active office of charity. It

seemed as if she felt that her work was done—as if the signal of eternal rest was sounding in her ears. From that moment her strength did not rally. She sat or reclined in the shade, with her eyes fixed on the sky or on the sea, or fondly turning from one loved face to another, with a look of indescribable tenderness. Not one of them to whom she was so dear, felt surprised when it became evident that she was dying. Not one of the breaking hearts gathered round that angel form thought to keep her on earth. Nor father, or mother, or lover. She was too fit for heaven; too clearly on her way home. The work of a life had been done in a few years. The earthly frame worn out; the soul breaking its bonds. There was wild weeping amongst the crowds that gathered round our doors, when it became known that she was dying, and prayers were put up in all the churches for her recovery. But the word recovery had no meaning for us. We bent down in anguish, but did not pray to detain her.

‘She left us fourteen days after the one on which the slave-ship had arrived. Her last

thought was for the poor wretches it had brought. The priest who gave her the last Sacraments, told her of some little children born during the passage, whom he had just time to baptize before they died. She smiled, and said, "*Deo gratias.*" Those were the last words she uttered.'

Madame d'Auban remained silent. The maréchal attempted to express sympathy, but broke down in the attempt. He could only murmur :

'God knows I feel for you, madame, and I admire your fortitude. Has it never forsaken you?'

Her lip quivered.

'There came a time when it gave way, Maurice. For seven years we remained in the place whence she was gone. Her father took up her work, and as long as he lived, I could look calmly on those bright skies and those sunny seas, and the negroes toiling in the fields. He was stemming, with all his might, the evils of their lot. He was doing what she had done. But when he was taken from me, he on whom I leant with a too absorbing love, when for a while resignation

was only despair, I loathed the sight of all that natural beauty and that moral misery. I longed for obscurity, silence, and shade. Not that of the forest, not that of the green glade or the quiet valley. I fled back to the Old World, to the deeper solitude of a city. The dark cathedral, the obscure dwellings of the poor, the crowds that take no heed of a stranger, and this little room in an unfrequented street, are more congenial, more soothing to me now than Nature's loveliest scenes, more peaceful than its most silent haunts.'

‘And here you dwell alone, princess, alone with your grief?’

‘Say, rather, dear friend, alone with blessed memories, alone with dearest hopes, alone with God—bereft of all that looks like happiness, and yet happy. And now tell me something of yourself, Maurice, and speak to me of my sister’s children, and of my brother. I sometimes send for a number of the “Gazette de France” and see their names in it, but not with the old painful feelings it used to cause me. I think my heart has softened towards them, towards every one of late years. Is it

true what I read some time ago, that with the *bâton de maréchal*, his Majesty the King of France has given you the domain of Chambord, with a right royal endowment?’

‘It is perfectly true, princess. Fortune has been a kind mistress to me, and the king a generous master. I have nothing to complain of at their hands, and yet . . . to-night I am almost inclined to envy you, your sorrows, your obscurity, and . . . your faith. I believe you are happier than I am.’

Again, as when they had first spoken together, she smiled in her old way, and the face, once so beautiful, lighted up for a moment. They talked a long time, that night, of past events. They went back to scenes of early youth, and then kindly and sadly parted never to meet again. He died a short time afterwards ; she lived to an advanced age.

With him passed away the last link between her and the world she once belonged to. She lingered long on earth, a deceiver, and yet true ; unknown, and yet known ; as one dead, and yet alive ; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ; needy, and yet enriching many.

Her life was a mystery; her story has become a legend. In the by-ways of history she has left a name, which may indirectly point a moral, whilst it serves to adorn a tale.

## APPENDIX.

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### PART I.

THE late Lord Dover published, in the 'Keepsake' of 1833, a sketch entitled 'Vicissitudes in the Life of a Princess of the House of Brunswick.' It is on the incidents related in that narrative that the foregoing tale is founded. They are given on the authority of M. Bossu, a French officer, whose travels in Louisiana are well known and much esteemed, and who must have been made acquainted with those facts whilst in that province. The English author adds: 'Every reader of this anecdote must judge for himself as to the degree of credence he is willing to give to it.' The story gained so much ground during the latter part of the eighteenth century that the Russian Government put forth an official statement for the purpose of contradicting and disproving it. Cox, in his history of Russia, dwells at some length on the subject, and so does l'Evêque, the French historian. They both quote the Imperial Manifesto, which states that the Czar Peter was at St. Petersburgh at the time of the princess's death, and that shortly before she expired he had an interview with her, the details

of which they give. It also denies that the Comtesse de Konigsmark was ever in Russia. Voltaire, in one of his letters, speaks of the supposed Princess as of an adventuress, who was, he says, an English-woman of the name of Sophia Donaldson, and who turned to account, in carrying on her alleged imposture, a strong personal resemblance to the wife of the Czarovitch. He says, she appeared at Wolfenbuttel some years after the prince's death, and claimed to be received as his widow and the sister of the reigning duke, but that she was sent away from the duchy, and a sum of money privately given to her, which latter circumstance does not seem quite in keeping with the assumption that her claim was an imposture. St. Simon mentions, in the 26th volume of his memoirs, the fact of the princess's death, which he says was caused by a violent blow from her husband when she was pregnant.

He adds that her beauty, her virtues, and her accomplishments would have deserved a happier fate, but makes no allusion to the story related by M. Bossu. It is probable, however, supposing it to be true, that it would not have been rumoured in Europe until a period subsequent to the one in which St. Simon wrote, and even not till sometime after his death. In the annual register for 1777, the same narrative is given with some variations and additional circumstances, which do not bear any appearance of truth.

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VICISSITUDES IN THE LIFE OF A PRINCESS OF THE  
HOUSE OF BRUNSWICK.

BY LORD DOVER.

‘ABOUT the year 1760, there lived in the city of Brussels, in great retirement, an old lady, who bore the name of Madame d’Auban. She was much occupied in observances of religion, as well as in extensive charities to the poor of her neighbourhood, who regarded her as their benefactress. She had passed some years in this circle of duties, unnoticed by the great or the gay, and apparently without connexions or relatives. Yet none in that city were born of higher lineage, or wedded to greater hopes; nor had any other of its inhabitants probably endured so great a variety of prosperity and adversity, and of romantic changes of fortune, which almost exceed the bounds of credibility.

‘Lewis Rodolphus, Duke of Brunswick Wolfenbuttel, married Christina Louisa, Princess of Oëttigen, who bore him three daughters. The eldest, Elizabeth Wilhelmina, married Charles the Sixth, Emperor of Germany, and slumbered through a tranquil life of Austrian precision and etiquette. Far different was the lot of her youngest\* sister, the Princess Charlotte Sophia; though she also was destined to marry into an imperial house. On the twenty-fifth day of October, 1711, she became the ill-fated wife of Alexis Petrowitz, Prince of Russia,

\* The second Princess of Brunswick, Antonetta Amelia, married Ferdinand Albert, Duke of Brunswick Bevern.

the eldest son of Peter the Great. The marriage took place at Torgau, in Germany, and the young bridegroom was in the twenty-second year of his age. The czarowitz was a man of ferocious manners, and his habits of debauchery had greatly increased his natural brutality. He is also said to have taken a violent aversion to his unhappy wife, and to have attempted no less than three different times to poison her. Happily, the princess, upon all these occasions, received such speedy succour, that her life was preserved. But the ill-treatment she received from her barbarous husband continued to increase. Nor was there any one at this time at the court of Russia who could control the violences and the outrages of the czarowitz, as Peter the Great and the czarina Catherine were occupied in visiting foreign countries.

‘At length, one day, when the princess was eight months gone with child, her husband attacked her with greater fury than ever, knocked her down, kicked her while she lay on the ground, and left her bathed in blood. He then set off for one of his country houses, without deigning to make any further inquiries respecting his unhappy victim. The consequence of the ill-treatment she had received was a premature labour, which her attendants determined to take advantage of, to deliver the princess for ever from the hands of her unworthy husband. They therefore sent a courier to him, to inform him of her death. The czarowitz returned for answer, an order for her immediate interment as privately as possible, hoping by speed and secrecy to prevent the

public from becoming aware of the manner in which he had behaved towards her.

‘The funeral of the princess accordingly took place, but her coffin only contained a log of wood. In the meanwhile, and whilst all the courts of Europe were wearing mourning for her supposed decease, she had escaped from the palace in which she usually resided.

‘The Countess Konigsmark, who had been one of the mistresses of Augustus the Second, King of Poland, and was the mother by him of the celebrated Maréchal de Saxe, was at this time at the court of the Princess of Russia. It was to her assistance and management that the princess principally owed her escape. She collected for her whatever of money or of jewels could be found in the palace; gave her an old and trustworthy man-servant of her own, who spoke French and German, to accompany her, and one of her own *femmes-de-chambre*. Thus attended, the princess set off for Paris, where she arrived without accident. Fearing, however, lest she might be recognised in that capital, she determined to go to America. With this view she went to l’Orient, from which port the vessels belonging to the company of the Indies, to whom the king had conceded the right of colonising Louisiana, otherwise called the Mississippi, were accustomed to sail.

‘The princess embarked in a packet with eight hundred other Germans, who were on their way to the newly-settled colony. Her faithful servant, who passed on board the vessel for her father, and her maid, still accompanied her. She arrived in safety

at the place of her destination. The appearance of the young and beautiful stranger in this wild colony excited universal admiration. The Chevalier d'Auban, an officer of merit, who at that time resided in the colony, and who had formerly been at Petersburgh soliciting an employment in the Russian service, saw and recognised the princess. At first he could hardly believe the testimony of his eyes; but after seeing her frequently, and examining attentively her air, her countenance, and her features, he could no longer doubt that the obscure exile was the same person whom he had formerly beheld surrounded by a brilliant court. He had the prudence not to confide his discovery to anyone; but feeling a natural interest in the fortunes of so illustrious an exile, he contrived to acquire the intimacy and confidence of her old and faithful servant, who has been already mentioned.

‘ At length the old man confided to him, that he and his family were desirous of making a settlement on the banks of the Mississippi, for which purpose he had brought with him a sufficient sum of money; and he proposed at the same time to the chevalier to unite his fortunes with theirs in the undertaking. D'Auban accepted with readiness, joined his funds to those of the strangers, and undertook the management of the whole concern; for which, from his habits of business, he was peculiarly well qualified. The chevalier thus acquired the opportunity of seeing the princess daily, of exerting himself with zeal in her service, and of showing her upon all occasions the most respectful attachment and devotion.

‘ One day, when he found himself alone with her,

he could no longer resist telling her the secret which he had discovered.—He fell at her feet, and acknowledged that he knew her. This avowal at first caused the princess no less surprise than pain; but after a time she became reassured, from reflecting upon the prudence and attachment which she had witnessed in the chevalier. She therefore contented herself with thanking him for his previous kindness, and making him enter into a solemn engagement that he would keep her secret inviolably.

‘Some time after this occurrence, the European newspapers which arrived at New Orleans brought accounts of the catastrophe and death of the czarowitz. The princess, who was civilly dead in Europe, and who besides was happy in the obscure but tranquil situation in which fate had now placed her, preferred remaining in the New World, and leaving her friends and relatives in the Old ignorant of her existence. At length she had the misfortune to lose her faithful servant, who had followed her over more than half the globe.

‘His death overwhelmed the princess with grief: she felt at first as if she had lost her only friend. But the redoubled zeal and activity of the Chevalier d’Auban, who now undertook the entire management of her affairs, enabled her to struggle through her difficulties. The respectful tenderness of the feelings which the chevalier entertained for her had also not escaped her. He seemed but to exist for the purpose of furthering and executing her wishes, almost before they were formed in her own breast. He treated her at the same time with the homage due to a sovereign,

while his whole life was spent in striving to make her forget her sorrows, and in procuring for her whatever comforts or pleasures that wild region afforded.

‘ His merits, his capacity, and his zeal, at length touched the heart of the princess, and she became his wife. And thus was united to a captain of infantry, in a country peopled with negroes, and in the midst of the savage natives, a princess, born herself of a sovereign house, the widow of the heir of one of the vastest empires of the world, and the sister of the Empress of Germany. The newly-married couple lived happily, and struggled contentedly through all the difficulties which must accompany a residence in a newly-settled country. The princess did not disdain to assist her husband in the labours of the establishment. Time passed rapidly away, and Heaven blessed their union with a daughter, whom Madame d’Auban nursed herself, and to whom she taught her own language, German.

‘ After some years of tranquil happiness, passed in the manner here described, the Chevalier d’Auban was attacked with a disorder which required surgical aid. He therefore sold his property in Louisiana, and came to Paris, with the view of obtaining it. Madame d’Auban nursed her husband with the tenderest affection. During the convalescence of the chevalier, she sometimes went with her daughter to walk in the gardens of the Tuileries. One day, as she was talking German to her, the Count de Saxe, who was passing along the same walk, and who was attracted by the sound of his native language, approached them. What was his surprise, on recog-

nising in the elder of the two strangers the Princess of Russia, whom he, with the rest of the world, had imagined to have died many years before.

‘ Madame d’Auban, upon his discovering to her that he knew her, implored him to guard her secret ; and then related to him in what manner the Countess Konigsmark had favoured her escape from Petersburgh. The Count de Saxe promised what she wished with regard to the world in general ; but informed her, that he should feel it his duty to state the circumstance to the King of France. The princess then entreated him, at all events, not to make the disclosure for the space of three months. The count consented to this ; and then demanded the permission to come and see her ; to which she agreed, on condition that he would only come at night, and alone.

‘ In the meanwhile the Chevalier d’Auban had recovered his health, but found his means of subsistence nearly exhausted. He solicited and obtained from the French East India Company the situation of major of the Island of Bourbon. The Count de Saxe paid visits from time to time to the princess ; and at length, when the three months were expired, he went to her house, in order to inform her that the time was now arrived when he intended to mention her name to the king. Upon arriving at her lodging, he was much astonished to find that she had set off, with her husband and her daughter, for the Island of Bourbon.

‘ The Count de Saxe went immediately to the king, and told him the whole story. The king sent [in

consequence for his minister, and ordered him to write to the governor of Bourbon, desiring him to treat Madame d'Auban with the greatest respect and attention. His majesty also wrote, with his own hand, a letter to the Queen of Hungary, though he was at that time at war with that sovereign, to give her information respecting the fate of her aunt. The queen returned an answer of thanks to the king, and sent him a letter, to be forwarded to Madame d'Auban, in which she entreated her to come to her, and to leave her husband and daughter, for whom the King of France would provide.

‘ This offer the princess at once and peremptorily refused. She remained in the Island of Bourbon until the year 1754, when, having become a widow, and having also lost her daughter, she returned to Paris. From thence she went to Brussels, where she remained till her death, in extreme old age; subsisting upon a pension of sixty thousand florins (given her by the House of Brunswick), of which she devoted three-fourths to objects of charity and benevolence.’

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### VOL. I. CHAPTER I.

*Translation of a letter from the Père Rasles, Missionary in the Nouvelle France, to his nephew.*

‘ THE village of Narantsouak, where I live, is situated on the banks of a river which flows into the sea at about thirty leagues distance from it. I have built here a neat and well ornamented church. I have

spared no pains to make everything belonging to the Divine service handsome and suitable. The vestments, chasubles, chalices, &c., are all such as would be admired in Europe. I have formed a body of forty young savages, to whom I assign various functions. Some sing in the choir, some serve at mass and benediction, a great number of Indians come even considerable distances to join in our processions. You would be surprised to see how well they behave, and how pious they are.

‘Two chapels have been built, at three hundred steps from the village; one is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and contains her Image, the other further down the stream, is dedicated to the Angel Guardians. We have always a great abundance of lights at all the services. The green wax which is made out of the bays of a particular sort of laurel, which grows abundantly in this part of the country, enables us to do this with great facility. As these chapels are on the road which leads to the woods and to the fields, the savages always stop a moment on their way as they pass them to say a prayer. There is a holy rivalry between the women of the village as to who shall decorate and embellish most their nearest chapel on the days of the processions. They devote to this object their jewels, their richest stuffs . . . All my converts came twice a day to church; very early in the morning to hear mass, and for night prayers, which we say at the hour of sunset. As it is necessary to fix the imaginations of the savages, who are easily distracted, I have composed prayers and hymns which they repeat or sing

during the holy sacrifice of the mass, and which instruct them how to enter into its spirit. Besides regular sermons on Sundays and holydays, and give them on most days a short instruction to warn them against their most habitual temptations, and strengthen them in the practice of virtue. After mass I teach the catechism to the young people and children; a great many adults attend it and answer my questions with great docility. The rest of the morning till twelve o'clock, is devoted to speaking with all those who come to see me for various reasons. They confide to me their sorrows and difficulties, or tell me their grievances, or consult me about their marriages and other affairs, I have to instruct, to comfort, to mediate, to calm uneasy consciences, to reprove in some cases, and, in short, to work hard at sending them all away in good dispositions. In the afternoon I visit the sick, or instruct in their cabins those who particularly need it. If a council is held, which is often the case, in the village, I am deputed to preside at it, and requested to assist at its deliberations. I approve or dissent from their resolutions as needs be, and I find them always ready to adhere to my advice. When they give a feast they send for me to say grace. The guests bring a wooden platter, in which their share of good things is placed, and they carry it away with them. This is the mode of entertaining in this part of the world.

‘In the midst of these incessant occupations, you can scarcely imagine how quickly time goes by. At one time I could not find time to say my office or to sleep, for even in the night the savages, who do not

excel in the virtue of discretion, invaded continually my hut. But some years ago I made it a rule not to speak to anyone after night prayers, until after mass the next morning, and I absolutely forbade everybody to disturb me during those hours unless for some sufficient reason, such as a person's dangerous illness, or an affair that did not brook delay. I am now, therefore, generally able to devote those hours to prayer and repose.

‘ When the savages go on their fishing or hunting expeditions, they build for me with logs and pieces of bark a temporary chapel and hut in the neighbourhood of their haunts ; and we perform our religious services with the same reverence and the same numerous attendance as when at home. This, my dear nephew, is a sketch of my mode of life. As to myself, I can only say that I see nothing but savages, and hear and speak nothing but their language. My food is very simple. I have never been able to accustom myself to their way of dressing meat and fish, so that I never eat anything but maize, which I make into a kind of paste by boiling it and sweetening it with the syrup of the maple tree, which grows in abundance in this country, and produces sugar almost as good as that of the sugar canes.’\*

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## VOL. I. CHAPTER II.

‘ SIMON, with a few hirelings, was come from the Illinois, and had been waiting for us for two or three

\* *Lettres curieuses et édifiantes*, 6th volume, page 127.

months. Simon is a bargeman from the Mission of the Illinois. They call here *hirelings* (engagés), the men who hire themselves out to row a barge or a boat, and one might add, to try the patience of those they convey.\*

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VOL. I. CHAPTER VI.

*The following extract from Thackeray's 'Four Georges' gives evidence of the system of religious, or rather non-religious, system of education, prevalent in the northern courts of Germany in the last century.*

'It was the first Elector of Hanover who made the fortunate marriage which bestowed the race of Hanoverian sovereigns upon us Britons. Nine years after Charles Stuart lost his head, his niece Sophia, one of many children of another luckless dethroned sovereign, the Elector Palatine, married Ernest Augustus of Brunswick, and brought the reversion of the crown of the three kingdoms in her scanty trousseau. One of the handsomest, the most cheerful, sensible, shrewd, accomplished of women was Sophia, daughter of Frederick the winter, King of Bohemia. The other daughters of lovely Elizabeth Stuart went off into the Catholic Church; this one, luckily for her family, remained, I cannot say faithful to the Protestant religion, but at least she adopted no other. An agent of the French king's, Gourville, a convert himself, strove to bring her and her husband to a

\* Lettres curieuses et édifiantes, 6th volume.

sense of the truth, and tells us that he one day asked Madame, the Duchess of Hanover, of what religion her daughter was, then a pretty girl of thirteen years old. The duchess replied that the princess *was of no religion as yet*. They were waiting to know of what religion her husband would be, Protestant or Catholic, before instructing her. This daughter, of whose early education we have made mention, was married to the Elector of Brandenburgh, and so her religion settled finally on the Protestant side.

‘It must be told to the honour of Catherine of Anspach (who afterwards married George II.), that at a time when German princes thought as little of changing their religion than you of altering your caps, she refused to give up Protestantism for the other creed, although an archduke, afterwards to be an emperor, was offered to her for a bridegroom. Her Protestant relations in Berlin were angry at her rebellious spirit. It was they who tried to convert her!

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### VOL. I. CHAPTER VI.

As it is not unreasonable to suppose that the same customs and habits prevailed in the Court of Russia during the earlier part of the century, as existed at the time of the Empress Catherine’s arrival in that country in the year 1744, a few extracts from her journal are given, in order to show to what trials a young princess, born and educated in a more civilised country, would have been likely to endure in that semi-barbarous court.

Ten days after her arrival at St. Petersburgh, the young Princess Sophia Augusta Frederica of Anhalt-Zerbst-Bernbourg, the betrothed bride of Peter, Duke of Holstein, the heir to the throne, nephew of the reigning Empress Elizabeth, and grandson of Peter the Great, writes as follows:—‘ I have now three masters to instruct me. Simon Theodorsky teaches me the Greek religion; Basil Adadouroff the Russian language; and Laudet, the ballet-master, dancing.’ A few days later the princess falls dangerously ill. Her mother, who had accompanied her to the Court of Russia, wishes her to see a Lutheran clergyman, but the future empress objects, sends for a Greek priest, and makes the following remark, with reference to this stroke of policy:—‘ Simon Theodorsky came, and we conversed in everybody’s hearing in a way which gave general satisfaction. This brought me into great favour with the empress and all the court.’

A few pages on she mentions the advice which she receives from one of the few friends who appears to have taken any interest in her during the months which preceded her marriage. ‘ Count Gillembourg (she writes) was a very clever man, rather old, and highly esteemed by my mother. I had reason to be grateful to him, for when we had seen him at Hamburg he noticed how little my mother cared for me, and he told her she was wrong, and that I was wise beyond my years. He informed me I had a philosophical turn of mind, and when he came to St. Petersburgh he enquired how my philosophy thrived in the midst of the whirlwind I lived in. I told him how I employed my time in my own room; learning

the Russian language, playing on the pianoforte, and reading all the books I could buy. He said that a philosopher of fifteen years of age could have but little self-knowledge ; and that, surrounded as I was by numberless shoals, unless my soul was of a very superior order, I must infallibly be shipwrecked, and that I must strengthen my soul by the best possible course of reading, for which purpose he recommended me to get Plutarch's 'Lives of Great Men,' 'Cicero's Life,' and Montesquieu's 'History of the Greatness and the Decline of the Roman Empire.' I immediately sent for those books, which I found it very difficult to procure at St. Petersburgh.'

Immediately after the princess's marriage she finds out that spies are set about her. When she wishes to speak to one of her bedchamber women, she notices her affright.

'For God's sake, madam,' the attendant says, 'do not say anything to me. We have received strict orders never to speak with you in a low voice, or but in the presence of the first woman in waiting.' One of these attendants, the cheerfulness of whose disposition had cheered her mistress, who was in very low spirits at her mother's final departure from Russia, and the brutal and disgusting conduct of her youthful husband, disappears one day. The princess asks for her. She is given to understand that Mademoiselle Toukoff is gone to see her sick mother. The empress tells her the next day that she is dismissed and is on her way to Moscow. And when the princess endeavours to soften her disgrace by promoting the marriage of Mademoiselle Toukoff with

an officer of the Guards, both are banished to Siberia. From that moment forward the least sign of confidence in or of preference for any person of her household proved the signal for an instant dismissal. The discomforts endured by the Princess of Anhalt show what must have been those experienced by the Princess of Wolfenbuttel forty years before.

‘Our mode of travelling,’ she says, ‘was wretched and disagreeable. The stations and post-houses were occupied by the empress. We had tents put up for us, or were sometimes lodged in the servant’s offices. I remember having to dress one day near an oven, where bread had just been baked ; and another time that in the tent where my bed was placed water was an inch deep. There were no fixed hours either for rest or for meals, and we were often tired almost to death. I felt miserably lonely, and my spirits were deplorable. I had recourse to books. Since my marriage I was always reading. Novels at first, but I got tired of them. Then I fell in with Madame de Sévigné’s letters, which amused me ; and then with Voltaire’s works, which I read from beginning to end.’ When the princess’s father died, she took it naturally to heart, and cried a good deal. At the end of eight days she got a message from the empress to say that her imperial majesty requested her to leave off crying, for that her father was not a king, and she had wept quite long enough. ‘True,’ the princess answered, ‘he was not a king, but he was my father.’ To which the lady-in-waiting replied, ‘It is not befitting that a grand duchess should weep for more than eight days for a father who was not a king.’ She was

forbidden to write herself to her mother, for the letters of a grand duchess of Russia were to be composed by the Council for Foreign Affairs, and she had only to sign them. When she begged to mention what she wished to be said in these letters, it was pointed out to her that the council knew better than she did what it was proper for her to write. She says again later, 'I had been for many years forbidden to write to my mother.' The moral and physical sufferings endured at that formal but uncivilised court seem to have been on a par. The following account testifies to the latter class of miseries :—

'This year we lodged in a new wing, built of wood, and so damp that the water was running down the walls. In the chamber called my dressing-room, my ladies and maids of honour and their waiting-maids were all lodged, so that there were seventeen women and girls sleeping in one room, which had three windows, but no entrance or exit but through my bed-room. The misery and discomfort of this arrangement was intolerable. I do not know how those seventeen women crowded in one room, and some of them ill, did not breed a fever. The smell was dreadful, and my room so full, in consequence, of vermin of all sorts that I could not sleep.'

Another of the habitations for a while occupied by the grand duke and grand duchess is thus described :—

'We received orders to remove to the bishop's house. This was a very old house, built of wood, with no look-out at all. The stones were so old and so full of holes that one could see the fire through

them, and the rooms so filled with smoke that it hurt our eyes. There was only a wooden staircase, and the windows high above the ground. One was liable to be burnt to death in this abode. Three times it caught fire during the time we lived in it; I caught on one of these occasions a sore throat and fever. The Austrian ambassador noticed one day the redness of my eyes, and asked me if I had been crying. He was not mistaken. Ennui, ill health, and the amount of moral and physical misery I was subjected to effectually depressed my spirits.'

In support of the account given in the 17th chapter of the forgoing work, of the isolation and neglect to which etiquette and courtly indifference consigned a Russian princess in the eighteenth century, and of the separation from her children, which the same absolute rules enforced, the following extracts are adduced :—

‘ In the month of August, we returned to the summer palace. It was a mortal blow to me when I heard that the rooms I was to occupy at the time of my confinement, were those adjoining to the empress’s apartments. Alexander Shouvaloff took me to see them. I found two rooms, with only one entrance, dull, like all those of the summer palace, with hangings of crimson damask, but hardly any furniture, or comforts of any kind. I saw I should be isolated, without any sort of society, and as unhappy as possible. I mentioned this to Serge Soltikoff and to Princess Gagarine, who did not like each other, but, being both much attached to me, were, on that one point, united; but they agreed

there was nothing to be done. I was taken ill in the night of the following Tuesday, and Madame Vladislava sent for the midwife, and woke the grand duke and Count Alexander Shouvaloff, who went to give notice to the empress, who came to my room at two o'clock in the morning. After great sufferings, I was brought to bed at about twelve o'clock, A.M. As soon as my son was born and dressed, the empress sent for her confessor, who gave him the name of Paul. Then she told the midwife to take the child and to follow her. I remained on my bed of suffering. This bed was standing between a door, through which I could see the light, and two great windows, which shut badly. On the right side was a door opening into my dressing-room; and on the left, one leading to Madame Vladislava's room. As soon as the empress had left, the grand duke went away too; and so did M. and Madame Shouvaloff; and nobody came near me till three o'clock. I entreated Madame Vladislava to move me into my own bed, but she said she could not venture to do so on her own authority. She sent several times for the midwife but she did not come. I asked for something to drink and received the same answer. At last, at three o'clock, the Countess Shouvaloff arrived in full dress, having made a grand toilette. When she saw me lying in the same place where she had left me, she made a great exclamation, and said it was enough to kill me. This was very consoling for me, who had been, as it was, crying bitterly since the moment of my confinement, and especially at the utter neglect with which I was treated; lying on a

hard couch after horrible sufferings, between doors and windows that did not shut, nobody daring to help me into my bed, and without strength to stir alone. Madame Shouvaloff went away, and half-an-hour afterwards the midwife came. She said the empress was so taken up with the child that she would not let her go for a moment. As to me, I was not thought of at all. I was dying of thirst. At last I was moved into my bed ; and, during the rest of the day, not a single creature came near me or sent to enquire after me. The empress never left the child, and the grand duke did nothing but drink with his companions. The city and country were, meanwhile, rejoicing over my son's birth. The next day I was seized with violent rheumatic pains, and I could not sleep, and had a high fever. Still nobody took any heed of me. The grand duke came into my room for a minute, and went away, saying he had not time to remain. I did nothing but moan and weep. Madame Vladislava was the only person I saw, and she was sorry for me, I know. But she could do nothing, and I could not endure to be pitied. My pride forbade me from avowing how wretched I was.

‘On the sixth day, my son was baptised. He had been very near dying of croup. I could only have news of him by stealth, for to enquire openly after his health would have been considered as a proof of want of confidence in the empress, who had taken charge of him, and it would have given great offence. She kept him in her own room, and whenever he cried she used half to suffocate him by her excess

of care. In a very hot room, he was kept in swaddling-clothes made of flannel, in a cradle lined with black fur, and covered with a counterpane of pink satin, lined with wadding, and another one above it of pink velvet, lined with black fur. I have seen him smothered in this way, with the drops of sweat streaming down his face; the consequence of which was, that when he grew older the least breath of air gave him cold. Besides that, he was surrounded by a bevy of ignorant old crones, who, by dint of their senseless modes of management, injured him both physically and morally. At the end of forty days, the empress came to my room again for my churching. I had risen to receive her, but seeing how pale and weak I was, she made me sit down, whilst her confessor read the prayers. My son had been brought into the room. *It was the first time I had seen him since his birth.* I thought him very handsome, and the sight of him cheered me a little. But no sooner were the prayers finished than the empress had him carried away, and went away herself. From Christmas to Lent there was no end of dinners, balls, masquerades, illuminations, and fire-works, the finest in the world, in honour of my son's birth. I pretended to be ill in order not to be present at any of them . . . . After Easter, we went to Orianenbaum. Before we left St. Petersburg, the empress permitted me to see my son for the third time since his birth. I found him in that suffocating heat I have already described (the child was then six months old).'

Some years afterwards the princess wrote a letter

to the Empress Elizabeth, in which she says—‘ That she earnestly entreats her majesty to put an end to her misery by sending her back to her family. That, as she never was able to see her children although living under the same roof, it did not signify whether she remained in the same house, or was a hundred leagues away from them. That she was aware the empress took much better care of them than she could have done; and that she therefore craved permission to spend the rest of her life in her native country, praying for her majesty, the grand duke, her children, her friends, and her enemies, for that constraint and sorrow had impaired her health, so as to put her life in danger.’ Whether or not this letter was a sincere expression of feeling on the part of the Princess of Anhalt, it gives some idea of the sufferings she had experienced. In relating a conversation which she held about that time with Count Woronzoff, and in which he tried to persuade her not to seek to leave Russia, she says:—‘ He spoke of my children. I told him I never saw them. That since my churching I had not seen my second daughter. That I was not allowed to do so without a special order from the empress, near whose room they were lodged. That I had no doubt she took great care of them, but that being deprived of the happiness of seeing them, it did not signify if I lived in the same place as they did or not. About this time the princess mentions that she went to communion in order to show her attachment to the Greek religion.’ The whole of the curious volume from which these extracts are taken exhibits the melancholy influence of

a corrupt court, a depraved entourage, a state religion, a ridiculous etiquette, and a disgusting admixture of luxury and barbarism, on the character of a young person who, at fourteen, was endowed with a natural love of virtue, an amiable disposition, an inclination, as she herself states, to piety, and an ambition which might have been directed to high and good objects.\*

What it was directed to, the sequel of her history evinced. The reign of the Empress Catherine is the moral of this story. The sufferings and the trials which gradually depraved and corrupted her were probably not dissimilar to those which drove the Princess of Wolfenbuttel from the palace of the czar to the wilds of the new world ; or, if our legend of modern history be rejected, broke her heart, and consigned her to an early grave in the flower of her youth.

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### VOL. I. CHAPTER VIII.

For historical evidence of the horrible cruelties exercised by the Czar Peter on his rebellious subjects ; of his treatment of his wife and sister, whom he condemned to the punishment of the knout ; of the barbarities, startling beyond anything recorded of the most heathen emperors, which he inflicted on the revolted Strelitz ; of his personal brutal violence towards his victims, and the insults with which he

\* Mémoires de l'Impératrice Catherine II. écrit, par elle même et précédé, d'une préface par A Herzeu.

aggravated their sufferings; of his coarse buffoonery and cynical impiety, the reader is referred to the recently-published diary of an Austrian Secretary of Legation at the Court of St. Petersburgh.

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## VOL. II. CHAPTER II.

‘AFTER forty days’ march we arrived at the first village of the Illinois. On the next day I was invited by the principal chief to a great feast, to meet the most important personages of the tribe. When all the guests were arrived, they sat down in rows round the hut on the ground, or some of them on mats. Then the chief rose and began his speech. I own to you that I was struck with astonishment at the fluency of his language, the strength and justice of his reasoning, the eloquent turn of his sentences, the choice and the delicacy of his expressions. I am persuaded that had I been able to write down what this savage said, without preparation and at the impulse of the moment, you would have acknowledged that the cleverest European, with study and care, could not have composed a better speech, both as to matter and as to language.’\*

\* *Lettres curieuses et édifiantes*, 6th volume, page 176.

## PART II.

## VOL. II. CHAPTER II.

*Extract from ‘l’Histoire Générale de la Nouvelle France,’ on the subject of the Insurrection of the Natches in the year 1729.*

‘THE governor-general, without being aware of it, was on the point of seeing the colony destroyed by enemies he did not fear, and allies on which he fancied he could rely—who were, in fact, our great support, but who had been tempted to betray us. . . . There was not a single French habitation secure from a sudden surprise. In a few places there were forts, but in general they were only defended by rows of half-rotted wooden palings; which, had they been in a better state, could only have protected the habitations in their immediate neighbourhood. The security was so general, that the savages could easily have massacred the French even in the best-protected localities, as happened at the Natches in the way I am about to relate. M. de Chépar had had a slight quarrel with this tribe, but they had contrived, however, to persuade him that the French had not more sincere allies. So little did he apprehend the reverse, that when a rumour was set afloat that the Natches were plotting against us, he ordered into prison seven French colonists who had asked his permission to

arm themselves and organise a system of defence. He received at that very time thirty savages within the fort, and as many in his own house and neighbourhood. They were mixed up everywhere with the French—in the workmen's huts, and the habitations scattered round the village.

‘A day had meanwhile been fixed for the general massacre, but two circumstances induced the Natches to hasten it. First, the arrival of large stores of merchandise, which had just arrived at the fort, and which excited their cupidity; the second was, that the commander had several colonists staying with him, and that, on pretext of seeking game to offer him for the entertainment of his guests, they could arm themselves without exciting suspicion. The commandant gladly accepted their proposal, and they went about buying guns and powder, ostensibly for the use of the hunters.

‘On the morning of the appointed day, they dispersed themselves amongst the various habitations, announcing that they were going into the woods for this famous hunting party; and took care so to arrange, that in each habitation they should be in greater number than the French. They smoked the calumet in honour of the commander and his guests, and then went each to his post. A moment afterwards three guns were fired close to M. Chépar's house. This was the signal of the massacre. The Natches fell everywhere on the French. The commander and his guests—amongst whom were Messrs. Koly and his sons—were amongst the first killed. There was no struggle, except in the habitation of M.

de la Loire des Ursins, where eight Frenchmen were staying. There was some hard fighting; eight of the Natches were killed, and six Frenchmen; two escaped. M. de la Loire was just riding out on horseback; at the report of the first gun he turned back, and was assailed by a troop of savages, against which he fought some time, but at last fell, covered with wounds, after having killed four Natches. So twelve of the savages perished. But that was all their loss at the time of the massacre.

‘ Before proceeding to the execution of their design, they had secured the cooperation of some of the negroes. They persuaded them that they would be delivered from slavery by the savages; that our women and children would be the slaves; and that they need have no fear of the French in other places, as the massacre would take place simultaneously all over the country. It appears, however, that the plot was only made known to a few, for fear of discovery. Two hundred Frenchmen died on this occasion; a hundred and fifty children, eighty women, and as many negroes, were made prisoners. Father Poissan, a Jesuit, and M. de Codère, the governor at the Yasous, who happened to be at the Natches, perished also. The former was going on some business from his missions at the Arkansas to New Orleans. He arrived on the 26th, rather late in the evening, at the Natches, meaning to set off again on the next day immediately after saying mass. However, as the priest of the mission was absent, Father Paissan was entreated to sing high mass and to preach on the next day, as it was the first Sunday in Advent.

He agreed to do so. In the evening, as he was about to depart, he was told that several sick and dying persons were wishing to see him. He consented to put off his journey, and visited them all, administering the last sacrament to the dying, and carrying holy communion to the sick. He was just coming out of a cabin where he had been accomplishing this act of charity when an Indian chief threw himself upon him, and struck him with a hatchet. At the same moment M. de Codère, who was hurrying to his assistance, was killed by a gun-shot, and the savage completed the murder. During the massacre the great Sun, or chief, of the Natches was sitting quietly under a shed, and the heads of the Frenchmen were brought to him and laid at his feet. They only spared two Frenchmen, a tailor and a carpenter, whom they thought might be of use to them. They killed some of the women, but the most part of them were kept as slaves, and treated with great cruelty.

‘The news of the massacres, which broke out in several places at once, was carried to New Orleans by the Père Dautrelean, missionary at the Illinois, who had taken advantage of the hunting season, when the Indians leave their villages to encamp in the woods, to go to New Orleans on business. He wished to say mass at Father Souel’s mission, not knowing that he had been murdered a few days before, but, finding he could not reach his residence till twelve o’clock, he determined to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice on the banks of the river. A number of savages joined him and his companions, and offered them some provisions. When mass began they placed themselves

behind the French, as if wishing to assist at it. At the moment the priest was saying the “*Kyrie Eleison*” they fired upon him, and wounded him in the right arm. Seeing one of his companions fall dead at his feet, the Father knelt down and prepared to receive his death-blow. But the savages having fired upon him two or three times without effect, although close to him, it struck him he might yet escape. Still in his vestments, and carrying the chalice and the palena in his hands, he rushed towards the boat. The two other Frenchmen had already reached it, and, believing him to be dead, had pulled away from the shore. He threw himself into the water, and they contrived to pull him into the boat. Turning round to see if he was pursued, he received in his mouth several shots from the gun of an Indian. They struck chiefly against his teeth; some of them entered his gums. He undertook, in spite of his wounded arm, to steer the boat; and his two companions—one of whom had the thigh shattered with a gun-shot—rowed with all their might. The savages pursued them for an hour, firing continually upon them, but without effect. The two rowers were often about to give up, but, encouraged by the priest, kept on, and managed to keep the Indians at bay by pointing towards them an old unloaded fowling-piece which had been lying at the bottom of the boat. When they came near the Natches, not knowing what had happened there, they wished to land, but the sight of ruined and smoking habitations put them on their guard, and they pushed farther on, though well-nigh exhausted. At last they fell in with a

detachment of French troops, which was marching against the Natches. The surgeon who was with them dressed their wounds, and after a short repose they went on to New Orleans.

‘On January 27, M. le Sueur, a French officer, who, on hearing of the massacre, had been recruiting amongst the friendly tribe of the Choctaws, marched with 700 men of that nation to the Natches. He expected to have met the French troops there, but they had not yet arrived, and he could not restrain the impetuosity of the Choctaws. They charged the enemy with such impetuosity that they killed eighty men, made sixteen women prisoners, and delivered from captivity fifty-one French women, the two men the Natches had spared, and a hundred and fifty negroes and negresses. If the negroes had all been on the side of the French, or the French troops had arrived, the Natches would have met the same fate then as awaited them at a later period.’

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## VOL. II. CHAPTER II.

*Translation of a note in the Appendix of Chateaubriand’s tale, ‘The Natches.’*

THE<sup>7</sup> banks of the Ohio are peopled with French names which bear witness to the ancient glories of those shores. Indian families boast even now of the alliances formed by their ancestors; and proudly bear the name of Pont Chartrain, of Yberville, and of Termonville.

That of Maurepas is well known in Indian annals, but no gratitude is due from Americans to the memory of this minister. He it was who ordered the sale of the last Natches. The following reflections occur in M. Barbé Marboix's History of Louisiana, regarding this inhuman act of policy :

In the course of the wars between the French and the inhabitants of Louisiana, the conflict with the Natches produced deplorable consequences. This nation was reckoned, before the French conquest, as the most peaceful of the Indian tribes. But, irritated by the tyrannical proceedings of a French commanding officer, it carried into effect a horrible retaliation. In consequence, the governor of the colony deemed it necessary to make a striking example of this people, and the whole tribe was exterminated, with the exception of a few families which escaped the general massacre, and were received and harboured by the neighbouring tribes. From time immemorial the Natches had been governed by a family of chiefs, whom they deemed the children of the sun. M. Perrier, the commander-in-chief, had them all transported to the Cape Français. The head of this dynasty died there soon afterwards. The other Suns were supported for a little while, in a miserable manner, at the expense of the Company. When the syndics wrote to M. de Maurepas, to claim indemnification for this outlay, his answer was, 'I do not see what can be done, but to send back what remains of those two Indian families to Louisiana, or to sell them as slaves.' The archives of the Company

contain the following resolution : ‘ It has been decided after mature consideration, to sell as slaves the remaining members of royal families of the Natches.’ At the same time as this order was given, mention was made of civilising the nation whose chiefs were to be sold as slaves !

Two of the Natches thus doomed to slavery were sent to France. One of them had been brought up as an attendant on the altar of the Manitous, and had saved from destruction, when the idols were overthrown in North America, a young serpent which he considered as a fetish or charm. He kept it in a bowl and carried it to France with him, trusting that when this Manitou acquired its full strength it would deliver him from slavery.

This Natches landed at Toulon at the time when the famous Mandrin was filling with terror the southern provinces of France. The sailors had told before the young Natches wonderful stories of this smuggler’s exploits, and he became persuaded that the white man who so marvellously escaped dangers, must be protected by invisible agencies. He ardently desired to enrol himself amongst the followers of this invincible chief. Having contrived to escape, he wandered about some time living upon alms. After many unsuccessful efforts he succeeded at last in falling in with Rondart, one of the followers of Mandrin and his band. The young savage told the story of his country’s destruction, and said the Manitou which he adored had led him amongst the warriors who were the object of his admiration. The

singularity of these circumstances struck Mandrin. He saw at once how useful the fanaticism of the young idolater might prove, and encouraged him in his belief. He was given the name of Lohie, a derivation from that of Ohio.

Accustomed to see the prisoners made in war offered up in sacrifice to his gods, the Natches had no remorse in murdering and pillaging, and ascribed to his fetish the successful result of the dangerous expeditions in which he was ever ready to join with superstitious ardour.

Mandrin's band, whilst exploring the Forez, conceived the project of invading the castle of the High Prévost. A bolder enterprise could not have been conceived or proposed to the courage of the Natches. He accepted with joy the command of this midnight attack. Foreseeing the perilous nature of the attempt he resolved to carry his serpent with him in his breast, feeling certain to triumph through its influence.

When on the spot, Lohie dispersed his band for the attack, and before giving the signal, opened the can in which he carried his serpent, in order to invoke it. The venomous creature who had been painfully compressed in a narrow space, sprung out and fastened on the savage's throat. Lohie could not restrain a cry of pain, and his companions did not dare to touch the serpent so as to disengage him from its hold. The struggles of the wretched man caused his gun to go off. The noise it made gave the alarm ; Lohie's troop tried to fly, but the prévost's guards, surrounded them in an instant, and soon disarmed them. The serpent's head was cut off with a sword,

but the Natches was by that time at the point of death. He died in horrible sufferings, invoking the idol who had caused his death. Such was the unhappy end of one of the North American slaves.

The other Indian, born in the same region, and brought by the same ship to the shores of France, met with a very different fate. He belonged to the race which claimed descent from the sun. When he left his native land it was noticed that he carried a crucifix in his bosom. When questioned as to this holy sign, he stated that it had been given to him by a dying sachem.

Struck with the peace which had attended the last moments of the Indian Christian, the young Natches had vowed to renounce the worship of idols, and to follow the religion of the God of Truth. The genuine piety which breathed in his touching narrative induced M. Maret, the Prince de Condé's secretary, to deliver him from slavery. Instead of a master he found in him a protector, who naturalised him in the bosom of his new country. He was taken to Paris. In the midst of the wonders of that splendid city it struck people with astonishment to hear the young savage beg to be conducted to the house of God rather than to the brilliant sights which met his eyes. This wish was expressed at a great assembly which had been called together to witness the introduction of a native of the Louisianian forests into the dazzling atmosphere of Parisian magnificence—into a world altogether new to him. M. de Caylus, Bishop of Auxerre, obtained the privilege of introducing the Indian into the Christian temple, and of instructing him in the Christian religion.

It was in the church of St. Severine in Paris, that he administered the rite of baptism to the young savage. The procureur-general of the Parliament, M. Fleu de Henry, was his godfather, and the noble Lady de Senac d'Orgeville his godmother. He took the name of Marie Guillaume. The register of his baptism still exists in the archives of the Parliament of Paris. During the ceremony he kept his head bowed down on the sachem's crucifix. The court and the town crowded to see the North American convert. It was always with deep emotion that he related how the beauty of a Christian death-bed had led him to the true faith. These facts seem almost like a complement of the preceding fictions. Truth is thus linked with the inspirations of a writer who was the first to throw a romantic interest on the history of the Natches. M. de Chateaubriand has endowed this people with the prestige which suffering gives; and these true and touching episodes might form a sequel to his tale.\*

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VOL. II. CHAPTER III.

IN the court of this young monarch (Louis XV.) many intrigues were carried on. People wondered that a king of twenty years of age had not yet given his heart to any of the titled beauties who were coveting its possession. Such was the spirit which the regency had fostered, and a regular plot was formed to seduce Louis XV. from his allegiance to

\* The stories of René and Atala, and the history of the Natches.

his queen. His courtiers were tired of the sight of his conjugal virtues, and of his devotion to Marie Leckzinska. They laughed at his constancy—they used every art to constrain him to be unfaithful to her. For some time the king resisted. To those who spoke to him in praise of other women he used to say, ‘The queen is to my mind handsomer; I like her better than any of those women who flutter about me.’ But these perverse efforts were unceasing; the court turned the young couple into ridicule; the king began to wonder that he was not as profligate as those about him. It would have required a very strong character to stem the tide of that dissolute period and that corrupt society. When the queen had had five children, and had began to lose her youthful bloom, the assaults on the king’s heart, or rather his fancy, redoubled. All the young lords of the court, from the Duc de Richelieu to the Dukes of Epernon and Gesvres, plotted to lead him into vice; and before long the young Duchesse de Mailly assumed the position at the French Court which Madame de Montespan had so long held in the preceding reign.\*

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VOL. II. CHAPTER IV.

‘As I have mentioned Pouponne, I must tell you we are in a state of great excitement. Athalie is going to be acted at her convent. She is to act the part of the queen, and we greatly need your advice, sir.

\* Extract from the history of Louis XV., by Capefigue.

Just fancy that we do not know (that is, I have forgotten it) how Athalie ought to be dressed, when she must stand or when she must sit down, when she must be in a passion or when she must play the hypocrite. All this puzzles us very much. Could not you, in a moment of leisure, glance over the tragedy and mark these different points for us?—you would do me a great favour.

‘If you keep your promise you will arrive in time to make us rehearse. Pouponne shines in the sentimental parts, so that what she does in her own way, out of her own little head and taste, is a hundred times better than what we teach her. I have just noticed this in the scene which begins “Te voilà Séducteur!” I was not aware she knew it, and she repeats it better than anything else. Simple things are what she fails in, such as used to be the triumph of Mdlle. Lecouvreur. As to Pouponne, she likes to storm and rave—she is a little Duelas.’\*

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VOL. II. CHAPTER IV.

*Extracts from ‘Mademoiselle Gaultier’s Conversion, related by herself, and printed from the manuscript written by her own hand.’*

This narrative has been published in a volume of the Lives of French Carmelite Nuns, and is also to be found

\* Madame de Simiane’s letters to M. d’Héricourt. She was Madame de Sévigné’s granddaughter, and Pouponne was her grandchild.

in 'Pièces curieuses pour servir à la Littérature et à l'Histoire, par De la Place.' Mdlle. Gaultier was a celebrated French actress, who, after being ten years on the stage, retired from it and from the world, and ended by entering a Carmelite convent, the same where Mdlle. de la Vallière had taken the veil in the previous century. Mdlle. Gaultier's professional labours at the Théâtre Français had met with success and brought her wealth, and she lavishly indulged in all that wealth can procure. Nature had bestowed upon her many and various gifts. She was endowed with talents for poetry and painting as well as acting. Tall in stature, commanding in appearance, with a brilliant complexion and a graceful figure, she made herself conspicuous wherever she went by a display of the less feminine arts of riding and driving, and few men could boast of strength equal to hers. She once challenged the Comte de Saxe to try the power of his wrists against her own. His strength was proverbial, and no one in Europe had ever been a match for him in this respect. Nor did Mdlle. Gaultier come off victorious in the trial she had invited, but her antagonist acknowledged he had never been so nearly defeated. She was able to roll a silver piece in her hand as if it had been a wafer. For many years her life was notorious for its irregularities, and many were the scandals she gave. Her mad freaks were the subject of public conversation; and the following anecdote will exemplify the tone of her mind at that period.

She had been banished from the court of the Grand Duke of Wurtemberg on account of the insolence

with which she had treated a lady whose influence was great with that sovereign. But no sooner had she arrived in Paris than she resolved—not to submit tamely to the insult she had received, but to return at once to Stuttgard, and carry out her revenge. Secreting herself in that town for the purpose, she watched her opportunity. Having ascertained that her enemy was driving in an open carriage on the public promenade, she ordered a pair of fiery horses to be harnessed to a vehicle she had previously hired, and, driving as usual herself, she contrived to run against her rival's equipage and to overset it. No sooner was this done than, leaving the object of her enmity prostrate in the mud, she jumped into a post-chaise which was in waiting, and was on her way to Paris before the Grand Duke had had time to hear of her exploit.

With reference to this journey she writes, ‘In order to conceive an idea of what the strength and impetuosity of my passions had been, and the dangers to which I exposed myself when there was a question of satisfying them, just imagine what perils a girl of twenty-two must have run travelling alone from Paris to the kingdom of Wurtemberg, and from thence back again to Paris—alone with the footman and the postboy who drove the carriage. This footman, much more tired and more timid than his mistress, used often to come to the door of the chaise, especially when going through the woods of Nancy and St. Menéhould, and whisper in broken accents, “*Mademoiselle, do you know that we are in a most cut-throat sort of a place?*” I only laughed and

said, “Go on ; don’t be afraid. You follow Cæsar and his fortunes.”

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## VOL. II. CHAPTER IV.

MAURICE, Comte de Saxe and Marshal of France, was born in Dresden in 1696. He was the illegitimate son of the Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, Augustus the Second, and the Countess de Kœnigsmark. He entered the army at twelve years of age, learnt the art of war under Prince Eugene, and was present at the siege of Belgrade. He entered the French service in 1720, but soon after went to Courland, where, through the protection of the Dowager Duchess Anna Ivanovna, he was elected Duke ; but the Empress Catherine the First would not recognise his election, and he returned to France, where he definitively remained. He greatly distinguished himself in the campaigns of 1733, '34, and '35. He became a Lieutenant-General in 1736, covered himself with glory in the war of the Austrian succession, took Prague and Egra, defended Alsatia, and was named Marshal in 1743. He held the allies in check in Flanders, defeated them at Fontenoy, took Ath and Brussels, won two victories at Bocoux and Lanfeld, and played a decisive part in bringing about the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748. At the conclusion of the war he received from Louis the Fifteenth the domain of Chambord and a revenue of 40,000 francs. The bodily strength

of this Prince was astonishing. He could break a six-franc piece in two with his fingers.\*

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## VOL. III. CHAPTER I.

On the 25th of April, 1722, at a time when I was revelling in an ocean of delights, according to the world's pernicious way of thinking, and enjoying a fatal security even whilst compassed about with the shades of death—I happened one morning to awake between eight and nine o'clock, which was earlier than was usual with me. I remembered that it was my birthday, and rang for my women. One of them came hurrying to my bedside, supposing that I had been taken ill. I desired her to get me dressed, as I intended to go to mass. She told me that it was not a festival; for she knew that it was only on days of obligation that I ever thought of such a thing, and then not always. I insisted, however, and she assisted me to dress. I went to the church of the Franciscans, followed only by my footman, and taking with me a little motherless boy whom I had adopted. I heard the first part of Mass without the least attention; but about the time of the Preface an interior voice seemed to say to me, 'What brings you to the foot of the altar? Are you come here to thank God that he has given you the means of pleasing men and mortally offending him every day?' The thought of this my

\* Dictionnaire Universel, &c.

monstrous ingratitude towards the Lord overwhelmed me to such a degree that I cannot describe it. I slipped off the chair against which I was negligently leaning and fell prostrate on the pavement. When Mass was ended I sent home my footman and the orphan boy, and remained in church in a state of inconceivable agitation.

I spent six months in this way, hearing Mass every morning and in the evening going on in my usual manner. At last I bethought myself of the words of the Gospel, ‘No man can serve two masters,’ upon which I made up my mind. At last the day of my departure arrived. It was the very one upon which persons dearest to me in the world were for the last time to dine at my house. But dear to me as they were, my salvation was now dearer to me still. What I suffered whilst at table in order not to betray my feelings can scarcely be conceived. Nature and grace were carrying on a fearful conflict within my heart; especially I was agitated when some one said to me, ‘The fare you give us is too good for a Wednesday in Passion Week;’ and then they all exclaimed, ‘It is because she is taking leave of us.’ Feeling myself about to faint, I rose from table, and said I was obliged to go out on account of a payment which I had given my word to make that day. Everybody got up and accompanied me to the door. I entered my carriage, and the guests sat down again to dinner. But at the first sign of starting my anguish grew so great that I gave a piercing cry, which was heard in the dining-room, and the company were about once more to rush out of the house. In the meantime I had left

the carriage and shut myself up in a parlour on the ground-floor. My attendants persuaded the guests that I was gone, and that it was the cry of a child they had heard. I then took courage, and drove off to St. Sulpice, where my confessor was awaiting me. There, though greatly agitated, I began my confession. After an interview of three hours, my confessor, pitying the state I was in, put me off to another day. I returned to my house, where I was only to stay four days longer. A sense of intense desolation came over me. I was bewildered; I trembled. I asked myself, like St. Augustine, ‘Shall you indeed be able to do without all these possessions, all these comforts? without all these luxuries and pleasures which have hitherto filled you with delight? Will you abandon this little palace to go and live in a dismal cell? Will you take up with a mode of life so monotonous and so obscure, one which you have hitherto held in abhorrence, and that for the whole remainder of your existence?’

But I got over those terrible moments. At last the day of my departure arrived. M. Sanguet, my curé, had for a long time kept out of my way—I had so often turned into ridicule his pious exhortations. But when I told him the great mercy God had shown me his joy was great. I passed a part of the night in writing to the persons with whom I had professional engagements, and to the father of my adopted child, to whom I sent back the boy with a sum of money. I left the letters with orders that they should not be sent till twelve o’clock at noon; and that whoever asked for me should be told that I was gone away for

a long time. Then at five o'clock in the morning I left my home, never to return to it again. But I was not agitated by the same struggles I had lately gone through. I went out with the same tranquillity with which I now leave my cell to go to the choir; just sixteen months after that first Mass at the Franciscan church! In the same composed state of mind I arrived at Versailles, and waited on the late Cardinal de Fleury and the Due de Gesvres, who had been my constant protectors, and of whom I now took leave. From their apartments I went to the king's chapel to hear Mass. While I was there it came into my mind that there was in the chateau a lady whom I had grievously offended; and as I came out of the chapel I hastened to her rooms; but, in order to avoid the *éclat* which the first burst of her feelings might have given rise to, I sent to request an interview with her in one of the ground-floor parlours, where I was waiting. As soon as she came in, I closed the door and threw myself at her feet. The suddenness of this action took from her the power of speech. Still in the attitude of a suppliant, I implored her to grant me a generous pardon. I told her that I was about to retire from the world to do penance, and that I had thought it right to begin by fulfilling the most difficult of the Gospel precepts. This lady, who had been taken quite aback at first by the suddenness of my appearance, and had imagined herself the subject of an illusion, now began to recover her presence of mind, and said to me everything most harsh which a woman cruelly wounded in her feelings might be supposed to think of. After listening to her some

time without making any reply, always humbly kneeling at her feet, I said that I had not come there to justify myself, but simply to implore her pardon ; that if she granted it, I should go away happy ; that if, on the contrary, she refused it to me, God would be satisfied with my submission, and not with her refusal. At these words she held out her hand, desired me to sit down, and we were reconciled.

I left Versailles without taking any food. The action I had been enabled to perform had sufficiently refreshed me. I went back to Paris to the community of St. Perpetua, where I had a little room prepared for me, in which I was to remain until the inventory of my furniture was completed, and various other arrangements made.

As I entered that first place of retreat, what happened visibly to St. Paul seemed invisibly to take place in me. Scales fell from my eyes, and I felt as if transformed into a totally new creature. Once in that little room at the top of the house, I felt as if I had reached heaven ! The past seemed to vanish away. My house, my property, my friends, my pleasures, no longer dwelt in my thoughts. The tranquillity and interior peace which I enjoyed almost led me to feel as if my life, up to that moment, had been one long unquiet dream. My cousin, whose tears were flowing fast, and who could not bear to take leave of me, fearing to let me remain alone, and perhaps to find me dead the next morning, could not understand my eager desire to send her away, in order to enjoy at leisure the new blessing of solitude. I told the Superioress that I had taken a collation in

the morning, and that I begged she would let me have for supper what had been left from the dinner of the Community. There was some stewed carp, which I ate with the greatest appetite, strange to say. For the preceding three months I had not been able to keep any food on my stomach, not even a little broth. Some rice with gravy, which I had taken the night before for supper, had made me sick ; and now I not only digested quite well this warmed-up bit of fish, and a few walnuts for dessert, but I slept all night as soundly as a child of eight years old ; and this has been the case ever since.

As soon as my retirement became known, various reasons were assigned for it, according to the temper of people's minds. The world found it difficult to believe that, in the prime of life—I was thirty-one years of age—and in the full tide of passion, I should have taken, of my own free choice, a decision so utterly at variance with my past life. My furniture was put up to auction. This sale lasted a fortnight; during which time all Paris came to convince itself of the reality of my disappearance ; and all who came went away touched by a sense of the great mercy God had shown me. My kinswoman, who had undertaken the charge of my worldly affairs, was closely questioned as to my place of retreat. Refusing to disclose it, she was requested to convey to me a letter, and greatly entreated not to fail to deliver it into my hands. This proved to be from a friend, who exhorted me not to persist in a course which I had evidently adopted without sufficient reflection, particularly considering the agreeable position I occupied, the diffi-

culty I should find in retracing my steps, and the inevitable regrets that would follow. Many examples were adduced abundantly calculated to frighten me from my resolution, and to shake my courage, if Almighty God had not supported me by His grace. As it was, it is easy to suppose what my answer must have been.

‘ Providence had in numerous instances preserved me in a remarkable manner from accidents to which I was every day exposing myself, in spite of the wise remonstrances of persons eminent for their rank, age, and virtue. When they enquired if I approached the Sacraments, “O dear, no,” I used to answer. “And why not?” “Why, because I do not choose to commit a sacrilege, or to give up my pleasures until I reach the age of forty-five.” “But have you no remorse?” “Not I! What harm do I do? I do not injure any one, that I know of. As to a future paradise, I leave it to those who do not know how to enjoy the present. I am satisfied with the pleasures this world affords, and do my best to enjoy them.” Horrible infatuation! fatal blindness! which makes me shudder when I recall it. And it is on this sensual, reckless creature that the Almighty has vouchsafed to look with pity, and by that powerful glance to restore her to herself. For He had given me, at the outset, a soul capable of good, an upright, sincere, and compassionate heart, well inclined towards virtue, and full of a just horror of disgraceful vices. But, as I said before, the poverty of my family had caused my education to be neglected; and young, free from all restraints, with headlong passions, and without

any means of support, ruin and dishonour were, as it were, forced upon me. God knows how much suffering it cost me to forego virtue. He knows that at the age of nineteen, when I was in Flanders, I promised Him, during a severe illness I had—and most sincerely I promised it—that I would give up the dangerous profession I was engaged in, if only I could secure a pension of 200 franes. It might have been done. It ought to have been done. God forgive those who refused to do it. Poverty had alone in the first instance thrust me into the land of perdition, for none of my relations had lived in any but a simple and Christian manner of life, except my father, who, through his extravagance, reduced me at the age of seventeen, with, as I have been told, a good figure and a comely face, to the most embarrassing straits. I had a horror of vice, and, consequently, felt shocked when it was proposed that I should go upon the stage. But I was told that this was a prejudice which only existed now amongst the common people and vulgar bigots; that the court and the town were of quite another way of thinking, and looked very favourably upon persons who exercised so useful and so agreeable an art. Young people are easily persuaded; but experience has taught me how inevitable is the ruin of those who choose this profession, unless they exercise the strictest watch over themselves, and guard at every turn against the dangers that surround them. Only consider what a life it is! No occupation but the exercise of the memory; wealth, luxuries, amuse-

ment of every sort! The last three years that I was on the stage brought me in, free from all deductions, forty thousand francs. What a temptation for those who think of nothing but the present moment; and what a miracle of grace it is that withdraws a soul from so voluptuous an existence, especially one in the prime of life, and with passions at their height! I must admit, however, that I have known persons in that line whose conduct was as irreproachable as their talents were remarkable; but I, alas! was not of that number; I own it, to my shame and to the greater glory of God, whose grace is all the more evident in my conversion, that He chose for the display of its irresistible power the most unworthy of subjects; and I have to thank Him for this particular grace that since the day I abandoned the world up to this moment, I have never regretted its enjoyments, in spite of all the trials I have had to go through; and the violent efforts I had to make in order to subdue my overweening sensibility, which so reacted on my constitution that my hair and my eyebrows turned from black to white in a very short space of time.'

The Carmelite nun never lost those brilliant powers of conversation for which the woman of the world had been famous. Her language remained what it had been, clear, forcible, graphic, animated; but whereas her words had formerly deluded whilst they fascinated her hearers, now they lured them to the love of God and the practice of virtue. In her old age she became blind, but there

was no darkness on her spirit even then. She went about her duties as cheerfully as ever. She suffered no one to help her. The energy of her natural character, sanctified by grace, gave her the will and the power to accomplish to the last every obligation; whilst the tenderness of her heart, increasing with her years, made her an example of that charity which can never hear of suffering without seeking to relieve it.

A strange circumstance in Sœur Augustine de la Miséricorde's history was the intercourse which took place between the Queen of France and herself during the latter part of her life. She had a nephew, an eminent violin-player, who directed the orchestra of the Théâtre Français. Deeply impressed with a sense of the dangers of any employment connected with the stage, she felt very anxious to withdraw him from its influence, and wrote to the pious queen of Louis XV. entreating her to admit this young man into her private band, and eloquently dwelling on the motives which prompted this request. The desire in itself was sufficient to engage the queen's sympathy, and she readily acceded to the petition of Sœur Augustine. The manner in which she expressed her thanks so charmed her royal correspondent, that an interchange of letters of a religious character established itself between them.

The night before her death, which took place at the convent of the Carmelites at Lyons in the year 1757, the nun dictated to the Sister who was sitting up with her eight lines of poetry addressed to her

royal friend, entreating her prayers, and commanding herself to her compassionate recollection.

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## VOL. III. CHAPTER III.

M. DE LA BOURDONNAIS was governor-general of the Isles de France and Bourbon in the year 1739. He had everything to organise in these colonies. The administration of justice, the observance of order, commerce, and industry; and his mode of government drew down blessings upon him. In the war of 1743 between France and England he went to the assistance of Dupleix, Governor of Pondicherry, besieged the English in Madras, and forced them to capitulate. Madras, according to the terms of the capitulation, was to be restored to the English on the payment of a ransom. Dupleix, who had possession of Madras, refused to ratify this treaty, and a dispute arose, in consequence, between him and La Bourdonnais, which proved fatal to the latter. Indignant at the bad faith of Dupleix, he left Madras and returned as a private individual to the Isle de France, where a new governor, chosen by the imperious Dupleix, was already in authority. La Bourdonnais came back to France in 1748 to answer in person the accusations of powerful enemies, excited by his persecutor. He was shut up in the Bastille, where he remained several years without being able to get

even a hearing in his own defence. His innocence was at last admitted, and he was set at liberty in 1752, but he was utterly ruined, and died in 1755, after a long and painful illness.\*

\* *Dictionnaire Universel d'Histoire et de Géographie.*

THE END.

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